THE MAGAZINE FOR GUYS WHO LOVE GAMES!

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STRATEGY SPECTACULAR

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TRESPASSER BLOOD 2
SIN REDGUARD and more.

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of well-armed startlighters. From X-wings Yewings and A-wings to sonospeeders, you'll be able to unleash Rebel weaponry on the evil Empire in over 15 missions (day and night) – each spanning the vast *Sun Was* universe. Blast Al-Al's, I'll: fighters, Imperial shuttles and more. Strap in, young Skywalker, It's the fight (and flight) of your life.















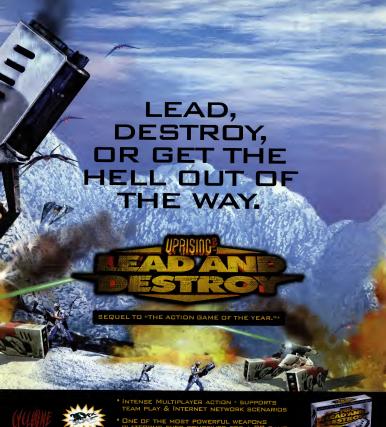
Strunning 31D graphics – unbelievably beautiful environments



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- \* COMMAND AN ARMY (TROOPS, HIGH-TECH TANKS, GUNSHIPS AND BOMBERS) FROM THE FRONT LINES WHILE FIGHTING RIGHT BESIDE THEM IN THE TRENCHES
- STREAMLINED INTERFACE AND DESIGN MEANS LESS TIME LEARNING AND MORE TIME PLAYING Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 79



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# LONGE SERVICE SERVICE

## ULTIMATE STRATEGY

You bought the games, now beat 'em. PCXL tells you how to finish Half-Life, kick-ass in Sin, and take on all comers in Shogo, Seventeen pages of mind-blowing strategy that'll save you hours of frustration.



#### DRINKING AND DRIVING -

We spared no expense to bring you scientific evidence that drinking and driving is dangerous. Alternately it can be great fun when all you're risking is a keyboard. Don't miss the games, wheels, drunks, and shocking results



#### DEPARTMENTS



43

Build the perfect PC for 1999 piece by piece. Plus , see the definitive bench marks for how the major cards perform with the hottest games



Reviews of NBA Live '99, NFL Blitz, Links LS, and a really crap skiing game. Plus don't miss the dumbest quotes in sports history



#### ONLINE ARENA

What is the future of online gaming? Find out this and much, much more in the ultimate hardcore gamer's section.



#### STRATEGY

104

The very best StarCraft player in the world gives you the secrets that made him the champion in season three of the PGL. Don't miss it



#### X-TRA III

News you can trust, from people you shouldn't. Hardcore or geek - How to make the perfect game girl - Voodoo 3 revealed - Inside Monolith - Fantasy Frag - Gamescan: The disaster movie edition - and more useful gaming information than in 300 pages of those other rags

#### UNDER THE COVER

While much effort goes into designing ahot, eye catching cover, nothing is more time intensive as designing the UPC bar code. As soon as the art staff finishes the issue, they guickly create a fresh new bar code and register it with the Bar Code Commission (BCC), it is guite a laborious process involving rulers and calculators, but we think a great UPC code makes a magazine look trily special.





#### PREVIEWS 🖷

55 AMEN

Our prayers have been answered with Cavedog's foray into the first-person shooter genre

62 TRIBES We revisit the enticing multiplayer combat game, but this time Dynamix is making us think

66 X-COM ALLIANCE Unreal engine + X-COM universe = one helluva game



69 GIANTS Half-naked magic v have cast a spell on PCXL



72 CONQUEST: FRONTIER WARS Digital Anvil finally has



75 You need a little guidance on where to spend those gaming dollars. First stop, the no BS reviews



76 SIN The second best game this month and a look at celebrity sinners



The hugely popular origina RPG gets a sequel



80 TRESPASSER Promising game falls flat on face, PCXL tells you why



this game

something to show



DOMINATION May look freaky, but this game ain't all bad



The LithTech engine gets another game, but can it



chance did it have?



LEGENDS Deep, detailed, and ulti-mately a bit too complex



MONACO GRAND PRIX license of drivers



92 REDGUARD Swashbuckling adventure or shitty button mashing?



OFF ROAD 2 An entire page about Hummers. Mmm...Hummers!



95 SPACE BUNNIES MUST DIE We agree completely



An entire page of empty promises, half-truths, and disturbing pictures, Really shouldn't be missed

#### 140

Console games better than PC? Has Rob lost his mind? Mike sure thinks so

















Tomb Raider III, Heretic II, Blood II, and many more of the years best games are here for you to play - for free. Try 'em before you buy 'em.

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Ledway manager od black a winte mate race rally • anachronox • fifa 99 • migh rsiege tribes • daikatana • madden nfl 99 • om: alliance • trespasser • simcity 3000 • alie k vengeance · inortin · heavy gear II · inters rzone: rbird sher ed III · war tered reality · starsies achronox white · sim city ? rgasm black avy gear // • need for specia in Myth II • ulti crifice • warbirds • unreal • dark vengeance spasser • anachronox • x-com alliance • ine rsiege • virtua rally • drakan • might & magic od 2: the chosen • shogo: mobile armor divi 99 • recoil • CREATIVE • madden n akan • power www.soundblaster.com rtua comma oc 2 • hostile waters • might & magic VII



It's a dark cave. Inside your head, you hear your heart pounding.

Damp **echoes** resonate from the slow **drip** of water. A low **rumble**.

Click — a gun is being cocked to your right.

You spin. You duck. You freeze in fear.

Bullets tear past you and **ricochet** from every angle.

You can't see her, but you know exactly where she is.

Great games deserve great audio. Look for this logo or visit www.env-audio.com/listen/

#### So real it has to be live!



JANUARY 1999

ACCELERATOR

#### EDITOR'S LETTER

### P accelerator

#### DESTINATION UNKNOWN

What an amazing first year PCXL has had. We launched a new magazine, which has been given more love than the only female in North Dakota. But alas the year is over and we must move on. Now is the time when I tell you all the things we're going to do in '99. Our New Years resolutions, to you, our loyal readers.

PROMISE... We will give a game an 11 out of 10

REASON --- Because no one else would, and it will deserve it

PROMISE--- We will hand out over 25 suicide awards

REASON --- Because there will that many games in need of killing

REASON ... > Don't we always

PROMISE-----> The magazine will NOT back down to anyone or anything

REASON --- Because if we did, we'd be just like the rest

PROMISE.... We will become the most loved PC games magazine in the world REASON.... Because you love us, right?

#### THE TEAM



NEW YEARS RESOLUTION—)
To stop smoking (yeak, right)
IN 1999 NE WILL—) Get married
yeak, right)
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NOW PLAYING—) #60(1/6, 5/6),
Khozo, Nilli Alv (on Grant II

There they are, the promises we surely won't keep. The only thing I can promise is that PCXL will continue to be the most entertaining and informative games magazine on the planet.

MIKE SALMON, Editor in Chief

## ROB SMITH

Q! DOROQUEZ

MEW YEAR RESOLUTION—)
Never to make another stupid flew
Years resolution
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In the office laying out another issue HOW PLAYING -- NHL '99, Roinbow 6,



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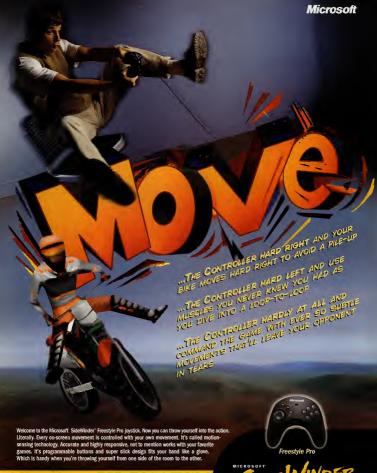
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Microsoft Motocross Madness" comes free with the Freestyle Pro.

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## DISC CALMINA

#### IT CAN FWWWWWWY...

#### If it just believes it, there's nothing to it.

ntroducing this month's guest artist: Elmer Fudd, singing the greatest hits of R. Kelly! (actually his only hit, but what the hell.) Take it away Elmer!

At Lara's Ass" in its third incarnation

Recreates one of the most lethal periods of

racing, or at least it is when we play (especially when we're drunk)

It's the MCA, and it's got nothing to prove

mature Waraasm

-> As always, your feedback is welcomed! Write to disceditor@pcxl.com.

The wettest game on two wheels

Four new DM maps and the 2.19 beta patch

A skinpack, after months of empty promises

I bewieve disc con fwy I bewieve it can touch the sky I think about it evwey night and day Spwead its wings and fwy owoy

I bewleve disc con soor I see It spinning through that apen daar

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D							TOMB RAIDER 3	"Stare

GRAND PRIX

LEGENDS

(D)		RESIDENT EVIL 2	Lacks its predecessor's irresistible cheesy voice acting, but interesting nonetheless
D	6	VR BASEBALL 2000	Yes the season's long over, but better late than never
D		HERETIC II	Corvus the Elf and his magical adventures
D		SNOW WAVE AVALANCHE	Snowboard your way to "extreme" status
D		TOP GUN: HORNET'S NEST	Another haunting reminder of the 8o's to, ahem, take your breath away
D	8	AGE OF EMPIRES: THE RISE OF ROME	The rise of Rome was nothing compared to the rise of pizza crust
D	8	BC00D 5	Blood, blood everywhere – cut myself shaving again

SHOGO: MOBILE

WARGASM

MAD TRAX

FATAL ABUSS

UNREAL

QUAKE II

ARMOR DIVISION





#### THE DISC MINI-FAQ

Q: How can I suggest a musical artist to the "high on crack" disc editor?

A: At this point, our disc editor, Ed, is fully Windows 98 compatible. However, some backward-compatibility issues co-remain with some of the wiring in his he So blame those Microsoft bastards (or genetics), not us!

Q: Why can't I play Half-Life on my 4B6,

A: Make sure your computer doesn't suck before asking stupid questions

Q: Why is their a small beach in my CD?





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TWO













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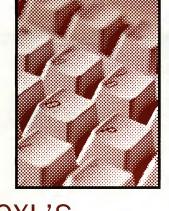












# STRATEGY GUIDE









## **Half-Life**

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW BUT DIED TRYING



Be wary of random explosions early on.

t's far too easy to lose yourself in the depths of the Black Mesa Research Facility. You get boxes to bash the crap out of, windows to smash, railings to whack, scientists to terrify, and security guards to order around, so the aliens can be an annoying interruption to the fun. Searching, skimming, wandering, and working your way through Half-Life can take a bunch of hours. As well-spent as those hours may seem, there's something to be said for having the answers to the trickier puzzles and traps at hand. Following PCXL's detailed guide, you'll see all the fine scripted moments and be able to explore at leisure. We haven't told you where all the monsters are (aside from a couple of key moments), so you'll find that out for yourself. As a rule of thumb, don't go into any dark areas without the flashlight on - even then those HeadCrabs are guaranteed to scare the shit out of you. But that's part of the fun, right?

Remember, it's still OK to bash boxes and stamp your feet on the resonating metal floors; just run while you're doing it

and you'll be home free (well. finished anyway) before you know it.

#### UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES

In the beginning, your path is pretty straightforward. It's tough to get lost; just remember that if you can't open it, try whacking it with the crowbar. Early on you have to use a few of the simple maneuvers learned in the Hazand Course. The first is jumping and crouching to get into tight areas. As you make your way through the carnage of the explosion back to the entry, crawl through the small grate (avoiding the HeadCrab) and then leap up the fallen masonry to crawl through the hole in the far corner of the room.

where the "X-Files" man appears - go find the cowering

scientist and make him open the retinal scan-secured door. On the descending platform, after you've pushed the lever.

Hand grenades and ammo

are available on the walkway

look up and let the auto-targeting of the pistol help you take out the raining HeadCrabs.

Where the bridge collapses, jump around the pipes on the edge of the room, and use the crowbar to crawl through the air vent. At the sewer area, remember that BullSquids hate Head-Crabs, so let them fight each other whenever you see them. Jump in that fine-looking green pool and head to the left, up the steps, and around to the far side.

#### OFFICE COMPLEX

Let the blue beam take out the approaching HeadCrabs, Go to



Take care of the zombies before leaping to the ladder.

the right and switch the power off (watch for Barnacles) to make it easy to get past the dangerous beam. Break the window and jump through. Where the HeadCrabs fall from the ceiling, move the two iron boxes to jump onto the ladder.

Let the automatic gun shoot the HeadCrab (and the scientist, a casualty of war). Use this time to shoot the gun down, or jump down and switch it off under the platform to the right.

Following the signs to Sec. D Admin 2, bring the Barney (security guard) along with you to take care of those damn HeadCrabs. Watch for the automatic gun above you.

Keep the Barney with you and meet up with the next one who'll take care of the zombie and HeadCrabs (that drop in from the ceiling) in front of the wooden barricaded door.

#### OFFICE COMPLEX







Both the blue power beam and the automatic gun fire at anything that moves.







In the freezer room, find the red switch to set the overhead trolley in motion (remember that Bull-Squids hate HeadCrabs). Go back to the entrance, up the ladder, and into the air vents and make your way through. Follow the signs for Admin 3 and head to the elevator shaft where the zombies appear. Leap across to the ladder. head to the top, and smash your way through the grate on the ceiling of the elevator to get it.

WE'VE GOT HOSTILES Red trip beams that alert static guns to your presence are the main threat. Use grenades on the guns. When you meet the marines.use the crates for cover and watch for them throwing grenades and dropping satchel charges. You're making your way up, so beware of Barnacles (such as those on a stairway where the marines are mowing down scientists) and over the high walkways.

As you take the elevator up. get ready for a mighty battle. The Osprey does bombing passes. After fighting off the marines (give yourself cover), race out while the Osprey is out of range and don't hang around. Dive through the open door and down

the ladder. Be wary of falling debris while opening the central ventilation shaft. Drop to the bottom of the shaft and into the tunnel. Drop to the lower ledge and take the ladder past the fan, then follow the

tunnels and go up the next ladder to the first opening (not the top) Open silo.

BLAST PIT Flick the switch in the control room to the right and take the elevator down. Take a

train ride, then make your way to the far side of the radioactive pit and get yourself up the ladder and into the pipe. Take the next elevator up, and when you're outside, after greeting the HoundEyes, carefully peg the one on the bridge without hitting the (exploding) barrels.

Open Silo Door 1 and then meet the object of this mission. Creep quietly around the edge of the silo and from a distance

throw a grenade at the boxes surrounding the ladder down. Walt for the Tentacle to calm down, then head down and use the same technique on the barricaded entrance.

Through Door 3, you need to get into the fuel room. Drop down the ladder (watch for the zombies in the shadows) and through the grate. Take a left at the T-junction on the pipes. Go down the ladders and switch on the huge fan, but get back on the ladder quickly to avoid the blades. Head back up and then look up. See that wood? You can smash through it and the fan now has the power to hold you up. It's a leap of faith, but make it and you'll be able to get into another tunnel that leads to the fuel room.

Now you have to get power. Go back to the Tentacle room and through the exit on the bottom level. Call the elevator and get ready to jump off as it descends Exit at Silo Do. At the top, flick the two switches (and say 'hi' to the scientist). Head back to the main control room and run a test fire.



shaft, grab the Magnum and ammo. The water can be confusing, Ignore the fans and surface to the side of the main area. From the top of the pipe, jump to

safety and then fall into the supply room (and use vour crowbar to gleefully emach the supplies). Your task here is to get the power

behind you. Follow signs for the Generator









defeat the Tentacle.

erator room (go left after dropping down the collapsing floor). Keep turning the wheel to open the door. From the command room go right (avoiding the static guns). Marines and Head-Crabs don't mix so let them fight, and watch for marines

on. Follow the signs to the gen-

room. Use satchel charges on the elevator - send it up and detonate the charge to clear the claymores at the top.

Follow the signs to Maintenance and smash the boxes to get the pump working. Switch



Satchel charges let you explode claymores from safety.







Those pistons that you just got working can also act as stepping stones.

on the power at the generator room and head back to the Gargantua-guarded area. Here, head down the large tunnel that's now open (drawing the beast after you). Pull the lever to start the power, then use the side door to get around the beast, lump on the train, move it to the middle, go to the track control room, turn the central wheel, then head off into the sunset, through the barricade.

#### ON A RAIL

This is one of the more complicated levels, and the Barney tells you what you have to do At the first intersection, you want to go left

Leave the train here and go straight, right, right again at the crossroads, and up the stairs. Pull the lever to remove the blockage Be careful now - hit the next

switch to raise the bar. At the end of the line, go right. Throw a grenade (from the combat rifle) to kill the gun emplacement operator.

Go through the blast door and get to the next train.

Remember to avoid the red trip wires. Use the front of the train as cover against the rocket launcher. At the next barricade, take care of the Vortigaunts and head through to the other track. Go down the tunnel to the right (the one with the new train on it) on foot. Go through the next barricade on foot and use the satchel charge trick to clear the

claymores on the elevator.

Head up the ladder and past the moving crates (and grenadethrowing marines), take a right and then a left and take the ladder down. Use the boxes, then the sandbags, as cover against the gun emplacement, and throw a grenade at the gun to destroy it. Outside the blast doors. there's a heavy machine gun to the left that's pretty handy!

In the explosives room, use the metal boxes as a platform - crawl under the first two red wires, jump onto the positioned box, and leap over the last wire. The scientist will open the door to enable you to complete this task. Now head back outside to the next train

In the water take a left, then another left to get out fast. Follow the stairs and go back in the water, up the ladder at the far side, and into the room with the hanging cage. Go around the ledge and up the stairs to snag the Crossbow. Now head back to the ledge and go left, into the water. Turn the wheel that opens the grate, walk around the broken ledge, and leap over the gap at the generator room sign (blue power surges hurt). Get the generators going and use them as stepping stones to get to the far platform.

#### RESIDUE PROCESSING Turn the wheel, then head up

the ladder. In the radioactive tub, jump across to the small tunnel. Jump across the two stirrers into another tunnel. Get on the conveyor belt. Fall into the slime and head away from the fan, but as you approach the turning cog, go up to the left and onto the ledge At the conveyor control, make

sure the middle lever is up, the other two down. Stop the smashers and race up the middle conveyor. Follow each convevor direction, and jump onto each one carefully. At the spot where two conveyors cross your path, jump onto the first (it goes under the one you were

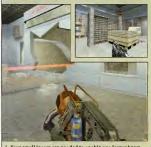






Don't fall in the green goo slime pits. It hurts. A lot.

#### QUESTIONABLE ETHICS



Four small lasers are needed to enable one larger beam.

on). Use some nifty jumping to avoid the barrels, then drop between the big claw masher and jump to the ladder.

**OUESTIONABLE ETHICS** Shoot the red light on top of the gate. The button protector also



responds to bullets. The task here is to get the four lasers going (and grab the Tau Cannon and Snarks). In the main laser room, hit the button twice - the second time doesn't lower the blast shield. You need a scientist's help to get out.



Surface Tension: Tanks and helicopters do hella damage. Watch your footing outside.





It is possible to destroy some tank turrets. Just.

#### SURFACE TENSION

This awesome level kicks off with the attack of the gunship. LAWs or a couple of charged Tau Cannon blasts will take it down (but first give it a chance to strafe the ichthyosaur in the water), Switch off the turbine and use the wheel to get through.

Find and open the storm drain hatch (the marines might have something to say about this). Watch for HeadCrabs popping out of the sand (listen for their distinctive sound). You need to







Surface Tension: Calling the artillery in to do your handiwork is fantastic.

go through the minefield (clear a path with grenades or by shelling the gunship) and leap into the hatch (it's through the area guarded by the Tentacle).

Outside, carefully drop a short way to each ledge. Get the LAW and shells and take the ladder up. Be very careful on the ropes - it's a long way down.

Use the tunnels to get behind the tank. Race past it to flick the switch needed to open the next door, allowing you to get clear of its blast. Get past the next tank fast. Watch for snipers and use combat rifle grenades to flush them out.

Walk up the collapsed power line and drop in. In this next room, don't trip one claymore or they'll all blow. Get to the main room and use the crowbar on the double crate on the elevator. Go up the stairs, bring up the elevator, and use it as a platform to leap to the central elevator. Take that down and grab the Hive Hand.

In the marine command building (past the tank), there's a security guard who'll open an Aladdin's cave of ammo and weapons. Jump out of the window and leap across to the power boxes to reach the ladder on the broken walkway. Make your way to the right of the broken masonry to get across, open this back door, then go fetch the Barney to use his security-door expertise.





Keep that guy alive. I know that's tough, but try it.

Here's a tip: Whenever you're on a higher level than the bad guys, the Snarks can be very effective. Throw, then laugh maniacally as they slaughter the marines. In the mechanics shed, use the

hydraulic jack to get high enough to jump through the blast hole.

You'll need the Barney to open two more doors after you've let more marines and Alien Grunts fight it out, When you meet the Gargantua. remember, it can't fit in small spaces, so stay in the corridor and rain LAWs into it.

In Processing Area 3, get to the bomb call and use the map to bomb the quadrant to your left (both the right wall and the door need to be destroyed).

#### ON YOUR OWN

Go west and use the crossbow underwater against the Ichthyosaur, Use LAWs to take out the tank turret and get behind it. Use the tank to blow the door and then the gun to mow down all that moves. The LAW works on the plasma turret around the corner. p. 30





Kegon Falls



SEEAO

When you design and build a 58-story tower with everything from deluxe hotel rooms to junce bars to secretif systems, problems will arise. And some will be more challenging than others. Like massive fires. Terroris tomb threats, And 87-year-old fadies who bought million dollar condos only to find themselves luings under the hottest rave in town, unwu, opport, com

YOOT Tower YOU BUILD IT. YOU DEAL WITH IT.



Make sure you've got the long jump style down, you'll need it to get around Xen safely.

LAMBDA CORE Take out the Assassins by fighting them openly in the light. You now have to kill four Alien Grunts so that the cowardly scientist will open the door. But he does give you the Gluon Gun.

Go to Coolant Tank 1 and hit the switch. This area is packed with Alien Grunts and Vortigaunts so be careful with ammo. Get to the Pump Station and hit the switch to turn the red lights green. Now head to the Auxiliary

Reactor, through the tunnel in the water, turn the two wheels, and get up the ladder as the water rises, lump across to Reactor Core B and turn the wheels on the overhead pipes. Go through the Core Level B door.

The Lambda Core puzzle: Watch the moving platforms to judge when to enter each teleporter. Hit them when the platform is under the teleporter to avoid falling and repeating the process. Here's the quick way through: Move to the right edge of the first platform, and as soon as you can, jump into Port 2. Duck under the pipe, move to the left of the platform, and jump into Port 4. Then take Port 7 to a new puzzle.

Anywhere but the central walkway (which moves up and down) is dangerous. Jump to that walkway and then off to Door 1, flick the switch, and then repeat that for Door 2. Get to the center and teleport away. Go out of the door behind you. Grab the long-jump device from the scientist and bring the Barnev with you into the main area. Position him under the scientist controller to help protect him from the Xen Controllers. Follow the scientist's instructions.

#### Take a moment to appreciate

the view. Use the long jump to get safely to the other floating platforms, and then drop to the larger area from the moving platforms. Find the mini-corridor (you have to crouch and smash through the mesh), Open the three pods, then use the crowbar to free the light flies to unleash the teleporter.

GONARCH'S LAIR Fighting Gonarch requires patience, First, keep moving around the central column. Hit it with the LAWs on P. 34





Hit the sac and keep switching to the pistol to shoot the spawn. You need the creature to eat the mesh to let you progress.





Christmas Eve, 2032. Something awakens within one-third of the Earth's population, turning normal people into cold-blooded killers. Has a deadly blochemical agent been unleashed upon the world? Or is this Armageddon? The world searches for answers but salvation may lie in the hands of one man...

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# TOO BAD IT'S GOING TO BE YOUR LAST.





its dangly sac. Keep switching to the pistol to take out the Head-Crabs and Gonarch spawn. After Gonarch's taken enough damage, it will race off through the mesh. Follow it. In this next area, use the central hole as cover to hit it with more LAWs. (Cackle as the HeadCrabs leap at you, miss, and fall into oblivion.) After more damage, Gonarch will take off - follow again and hit it through the mesh. When it buries through the ground, try to jump to the blue healing pool and then hit the teleporter.

#### INTERLOPER

And now your guns don't work. Don't panic, but move fast. From your starting point, head to one of the sinkholes to the left. It fires you above the moving platforms. Use these to get to the teleporter.

Out of the tunnel, head to the left and long jump to get the

Gluon Gun. Be very careful with ammo. Race across the other side and let the Gargantua clear the way. Carefully jump across the chasm and move silently (this is key because noise will mean your doom -- walk, don't run) around the Tentacles to retrieve the grenades and any other weapons you can lay your hands on. (The ones that you find in Xen are the only ones that you get to use.)

At first the Vortigaunts won't attack, so don't provoke them. Take the elevator up one level. get off, wait for it to come back down, and jump on the part attached to the pole. Leap onto conveyor heading to the right (don't hit the barrels, they turn in to Alien Grunts) and drop down

Just avoid all the attacks until a barrel (which turns into an Alien Grunt when you hit it) blocks your way. Use your grenades to clear it out then get the hell out

#### INTERLOPER-





Ammo is limited, so don't waste it on what you can't kill,

#### HALF-NAKED



(try using claymores behind you to destroy all those creatures you left in your wake). Get to the small crawlway fast.

It's another race for safety. Race to the left, up the ramp to the rotating elevator. Go through the red opening and grab the ammo from the three levels (but be careful with your footing). There are three elevators to get up, with Vortigaunts, Xen Controllers, and Alien Grunts attacking from all sides. Use the healing pool at the second level, get to the top, and jump through.

#### NIHILANTH

This is the final boss, so if you want to defeat it yourself, stop here. If you're stuck, proceed. First, Nihilanth fires two things: a blue energy bolt and a green teleporter. Avoid the bolts (duh!) and teleporter. You need to use the springboards to

get to the highest point (three jumps up). Here, fire whatever you've got at Nihilanth's bulbous head (watch the glowing red balls float out). You can crouch on this top platform to be protected from the energy

BLAST PIT

bolts and the teleporter. After taking damage, the creature will go to be replenished. Look at the light sockets. When they open, hit them with something (LAW) to blow them out. You need to repeat this for all three light supplies. That means you'll need ammo, which you get by being teleported by Nihilanth to various locations.

Type 1: Jump your way to the top carefully in the low gravity and avoid the HeadCrahs.

Type 2: As you fall, try to land on the rising balls. Otherwise you'll be slaughtered by the BullSquids' acid as you try to get back on the rising balls to ride up to the teleporter.

Type 3: This is where you get the ammo. In the water are LAW shells and other ammo. Grab it. then leap to the teleporter using the springboards and get back to bombarding Nihilanth.

After he's taken three shots. his head will open. Leap across and shoot at the brain. Get the hell out of there while he moans, whines, and explodes. Now sit back and enjoy the ending. Congratulations, you've completed Half-Life.







#### PAYBACK TIME

Fortunately for the battle-weary scientist, Valve included a few choice paybacks for you to mete out to the bad guys and to have a few other bits of fun. Here are a few to look out for ...

Get on the train and ride it at ton speed. Don't slow down when you reach the end, but hurtle headlong at it. Of course, given Einstein's (or Newton's - one of those scientist dudes) law, the force of inertia suddenly makes you and the train part company. Although there's no windscreen to fly through, it's amazing the distance you can

#### get when trying. SHOOTING SCIENTISTS

OK, so you shouldn't really, but there are times.... Nick one with a bullet and the scientist'll run away. screaming in terror. Now you can really

consider yourself a bad-ass. (The others will still help out if they can. Let's face it. they're all going to die anyway, so you might as well be the one at the smoking end of the trigger, eh?)

#### SURFACE TENSION

It's very, very simple. One heavy machine gun in the middle of the corridor, and a nearly endless stream of Vortigaunts waiting to teleport into the slaughter. It's a beautiful feeling — just a shame it doesn't go on for longer.

#### OUESTIONABLE ETHICS There's a crate of Head-

US VS. THEM The marines (gawd bless 'em) don't get on with the Alien Grunts. Vortigaunts, and Head-

caps into them

Crabs. You know you

finest chance to get

your own back with

fust nip into the pro-

tected room and flick

the switch. You can

all. Go into the next

ney into the safety of

pen, and repeat the

process. It's just so

much more satisfying

than popping your own

the room), let the other

adCrabs out of their

almost smell the

Crabs hate them. This is the noarly as much as vou don't. some callous slaughter. so when they're in the same area, just sit back and charred alien-monstroswatch the ity flesh. But that's not slaughter. They all room (and get the Barhave an

annoying ndency to turn their attention on you if you get too close, so bide your time, then pick off the weakened victors.

#### TANKS

If you get the chance to fire any tank's gun, do so for fun for a while. The thing with Half-Life is that it seems to never end.



pick of the weak winners.

Around ever corner, in every dark shadow, and in every pit there's some denizen on Xen waiting to bring your quest to an end. So when presented with some heavy artillery, use it. Even if there's nothing to fire at, the walls still get pockmarked by explosions, so go nuts.

## SIN

HOW TO WIN AND WHERE TO DO IT

in's deathmatch is one of the game's main strengths, due to a combination of excellent multiplayer code, interesting level deign, finely balanced weapons, and gratuitous cleavage. Unfortunately, there aren't any bots, which would have probably made Sin's out-of-thebox DM the best in the biz.

Here is a quick rundown of the DM maps, with attention paid to the control spots in the level. Many maps will have these spots, whether intentionally engineered by the designers or not. They are the key tactical areas, usually because of a crucial power-up (such as superhealth) or weapon but also due to positional layout. Finding these spots is a matter of playing the level until you get a feel for the flow. Of course, controlling them when you do find them is another matter entirely. One thing you can do to keep control is run a pattern taking you by all the major power-ups in the room. Once you have it down, run it constantly pausing of to score a kill. You can never have too much stuff, because everything you pick up is something

the other players won't. Of course, in the end it all comes down to pure skill. If you suck. running a beat won't suddenly make you a top player, but when it's close, recognizing the control spots and using your brain will give you an edge that just might be enough. That said, let's take a look at Sin's deathmatch levels and see what we can see

#### **Level Guide**

9 9 9 9 9

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PCXL RATING→ 6 IDEAL PLAYERS→ 2-8

A fast-paced area with tons of goodies. This level has as blatant a cor trol spot as any: The main two story room on the ground floor. You'll find the following all in one room: A 100 health power-up, 2 x 20 health, cloaking device, 40 x 2 energy cells, Quantum Destabilizer (100 energy), helmet, 10 shells, 40 x 2 bullets, and the assault rifle. Go into the next room on the second floor and you'll find the chaingun (30 bullets) and the armor pants. The 100 health is obviously the big prize, learn to run a beat in this room and you'll win.

CISCNEI ATT

PCXL RATING-) 5 IDEAL PLAYERS-) 4-12

A sprawling, confusing level where it's hard to tell where you are because every hallway and room looks the same. Three notable power-ups include the cloak, the super-speed, and the invincibility, Remember to use the portals in pursuit, whether chasing or being chased. They get you around quickly so learn its routes or extl points.





PCXL RATING- 7 IDEAL PLAYERS- 6-8





This level consists primarily of narrow, twisting hallways, making it ideal for the shotgun. Not surprisingly, there are shotguns and shells everywhere. The bottom floor is a great candidate for a beat player because of all the goodies down there: 2 x 50 health, 2 x 20 health, plenty of shotgun and rocket ammo, and helmet and body armor. A little way up a staircase you'll find the armor pants and the cloak.

GLUTTONY

A large level with both indoor and outdoor areas. The red pools scattered throughout aren't lava as you might expect, so swim around and check out the power-ups that spawn within. The speed power-up is useful for covering this level's tracts of real estate with blinding speed.

A beast power-up will turn you into the mutated monster seen in the single-player game. Since the level is so large, it's more effective to try to run a beat rather than control a specific part of the level.

PCXL RATING→ 7 IDEAL PLAYERS-> 6-16

PCXL RATING→ 8 IDEAL PLAYERS→ 6-8

As the name indicates, there are hot air vents throughout this convo As the name morcates, there are not air vents introugnout this convo-luted level that either propel you into the air or vacuum you into a slip-stream. You can take advantage of these for added mobility and quick escapes. A level that lends itself to surprise attacks and chases. A good candidate for a control point would be the room that spawns two 50 health vials. Keep in mind you can jump up into tubes as well as down them





GREED

PCXL RATING-) 8 IDEAL PLAYERS-) 4-16

This one has a large self-contained building and an outdoor area with a large oil rig in the middle. This is climbable, which isn't imme diately apparent, and at the top is a sniper rifle and 50 health - a blatant camping spot, it is pretty effective, as most of the conflicts will take place in the open area between the four buildings. Additionally, it's hard to spot someone up there but a well-placed rocket blast will knock you clean off. Be sure to use the 'walk' rather than normal running movement while camping.



HOT AIR



PRIDE PCXL RATING-) S IDEAL PLAYERS-> 2-8

A curvy level that shares a similar layout to many of these maps: multi-tiered, with crisscrossing walkways at different elevations. At one end of the main convoyul' find a speed power-up in the middle alcove. And in the room with the deep water (that you can swim in), you'll find the invincibility power-up.





PCXL RATING-) 9 IDEAL PLAYERS-) 4-8 A great high-concept level, Tunnel O' Love is essentially a moving train - 3 box cars separated by 2 flatbeds. With plenty of conve-

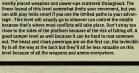




SIN CITY PCXL RATING-) B IDEAL PLAYERS-) 4-6

One of the maps included in the first demo, this recreation of a city Other Ore maps incursed in the first death, this recreation of a city.

Alpha, low, high "youth" Voil first of reflex of the ore of a ledge high above the alley. Controlling the street, a natural specifier condition, will be lety. Grabbing the fille and socioling over to the building in the end of the street (the fittual building) will prove effective. Controlling the street (a per tips out does if you have the street the property out of the street (the fittual building) will prove effective. Controlling the street is a pertity good ideal' you're a good open area fighter, because there's plenty of health to keep you going (s x so, y x ao by the crane, 2x x on it ned downway). Just be on the lookout for simplers.







pelgacore





### ISLAND FORTRESS PCXL RATING-) S IDEAL PLAYERS-) 8-10

Notable for a few spots where you need to rocket-jump to obtain items— — the trouble is, those items aren't ampling spectacular. The level is sparse on weapons and ammo, so you'll have to be a bit more thrifly than usual, especially when it's crowded. Right where the sniper rifle spawns is a decent camping spous.



The other map included in the first demo. The finished version of this map features no less than three power-ups (minchillity, beast, speed) located on the outside perimeter of the building, invincibility is on a ledge running along the wall, the other two are simply lying on the ground. When you get low on health outside, there's a 30 health that pops up in the scaffolding.





### DREDDAUL

### PCXL RATING-> 7 IDEAL PLAYERS-> 4-8

Consists of two slysrcapers facing each other that you're meant to jump between in true action movies style. Although it's recommended for 4.3 There is not a great deathmatch flow in this level so you're probably best of running a beat instead of trying to control a specific area. One possible tackies to grath the singer right entire to go of the probably best of running a beat instead of trying to control a specific area. One possible tackies to grath the singer right flow the top of the building with the smaller windows and find a good spot where you can see both buildings with the smaller windows for some good weapons and armor and don't forget the elevator shaft as an alternate way up.





### BEHIND ZEE BODKCASE PCXL RATING→ ID IDEAL PLAYERS→ 4-6

This one's an instant classic. Like that console game 'Micro Machines,' this kevel takes place in a world where the player an a shrunk to itty-bilty sizes. Pencils are bridges, sofas become huge trampolines. A huge trampolines and the common with plenty of himresting combines spots. Most of the combat will take place at floor level. The improbable ruler calapatif is key to the level and hella fun. A silpert spot high above the sofa will not you plenty of cheap kills. Bon't forget the passages behind ace bookses.









### WHATEVER PCXL RATING- 7 IDEAL PLAYERS- 2

Designed for two players, this is a compact Square design with several portals and plenty of lava. All weapons are included except for the sniper rifle. Camping won't get you anywhere because of the portal factor, so you're much better of frunning a beat – a set pattern that will take you past all the major weapons and armor- and getting all the power-ups and weapons so your opponent can't. An effective strategy on most maps but more so in a two-player showdown as suits this leveb best.

#3

### Weapons Of Warfare: or 10 Deadly SiNS



First-person shooter weapons are usually designed to be suited more for either single player or multiplayer. Sin's weapons seem to cover both aspects pretty effectively. Check out the great balance in deathmatch with this arsenal:

It is possible, to use Blade's own words, to open a ran of whup-ass on someone

### MAGNUM

important with this weapon since it goes through its clip pretty fast. Hitting the action key when not in front of a usable object will reload your weapon.

mote controlled proximity mines. These are much more suited for single player due to their inherently sneaky nature, unless you like that sorts thing in deathmatch. They will pack quite a punch if you can get 'em to work. Since they just skitter in a straight line you can't steer 'em around corners. Alternate fire mode

his one wins the 'most original' award. It fires a slow-moving blast of energy when blast becomes greatly intensified. Don't hold it down too long, or its ...let's say its bad, really bad.

Sweet, Looks todass, immensely satisfying in action. Head shots will be lethal, no weapons with alternate modes it's important to bind the "use weapon" function to something easily accessed. like the third mouse button.











#5

# Shogo

HOW TO DOMINATE IN MULTIPLAYER MATCHES

It's not quite like anything else. Packing heat as hot as a tank, yet keeping a level of mobility and constitution and the same as a force to be reckoned with. Push the brink of destruction in 3-story tall machines of death, laying down a suppression of fire that makes.

mass of huge explosions. Then, while still running at full speed toward your opponent, transform into a slick, hovering speedster and duck right past your opponents before they can get a bead to return fire.

And thus, we have the essence of what many gamers are already considering one of the coolest deathmatching experiences since the original Quake.

Shogo multiplayer is really two different games in one. There's the standard on-foot soldier versus soldier game, with such gleefully fun armaments as the shotgun (a.k.a., the closer area wonder) and the coolest assault riffle yet seen in a game. The combat is fun, it's fast and it's a gib-producing wonder. But, it's still just a lot of little guys running around shooting the snot

out of each other.

And compared to the MCA
game, it's downlight subtle.

Whereas in the single player
game, the foot missions ruled,
with the Mecha levels merely a
cool accompaniment, it's the
opposite for multiplayer. Most of
the MCA guns are larger than life
and meant to cause mass
destruction to everything in their
path, These are not the weapons

### **WHAT THE MAKERS SAY**

AARDN RDSE, 3D ANIMATION -

a whole city street light up with a



JOHN JACK, PRODUCER -



FAVORITE WEAPONS—")

MCA mode: The Bullgut. It's not really the best weapon, but a ton of fant to fire into a big group of people.

FAVORITE STRATEGIES—")

Compared to a lot of guys at Monoilth, I pretty much suck, so transforming and running away works well for me. I like to analyze my adversaries then when they think that they have a bead on some Sanlpuo, Logo 'em.

BRAD PENDLETON, LITHTECH SOUND SYSTEM 6 TODLS ENGINEER ightarrow



FAVORITE STRATEGIES...)
In the MCA, always transform
into vehicle mode when going
from place to place. Only be in
robot mode during battles. On
foot, never let your health go
under 100. You won't last 2 or
3 hits with many weapons if
you're much under 100 health.

STEVE LEE. MECHA DESIGNER AND TEXTURE ARTIST ightarrow



FAVORITE WEAPONS-->
On foot: The Knife. It's so funny to humiliate an enemy by slashing them, and it requires mad skills. Being an average player, it's very satisfying for me. The Captain Claw doll is a cool companion to use with the blade. You get double humiliation with



Shooting off rockets at this close a range probably isn't the brightest move in the world, but it is entertaining.

of the quiet marksmen, but for the pyromaniac in training. Urban renewal at its best, the

most interesting MCA levels are the cityscapes. The MCA's ability to super jump allows it to reach the rooftops and create battlegrounds where death can reign from not just the streets, but above and below you. The double jump is also a powerful evasion move, and, along with

......



We asked all the guys working on the project to share their tips for deathmatching dominance,

Being caught reloading at the wrong time is suicide.

transforming, your best defensive maneuver. Remember that you can't attack or jump in vehicle mode, but your Mecha will be able to scoot along the ground twice as fast enabling you to gather power-ups and weapons quickly while under fire. As with most deathmatching games, unless you're a girly camper, speed and movement are imperative to survival. Consequently, 'Hit and Run' should become a main catch phrase when battling-fire off some rounds, transform and get the hell out of the way as they try to fire back. And the Monolith guys agree, if you ain't shooting, you should be zooming around low to the ground. But whereas the MCA game is filled with wide-radius damage attacks that are not especially good close range for the most part, foot soldiers have more choices for that up close and personal touch. The interior structures you fight in allow for more hiding places to duck and take cover in as well, and with grenades that bounce around walls, there are a lot of ways to play.

Given the large number of guns, most gamers tend to center on a few that they find really comfortable. I love the feel and effect of the Assault Rifle. Equally as fun for close-range

Find out what the people on the Inside do to top the LAN matches.

NATHAN HENDRICKSON, LEVEL AND GAME DESIGNER ->

FAVORITE WEAPONS....?
The Juggernaut. I love the way it rips MCA's apart. The TOW rocket comes in a very close second, since I love the way it rips people apart.
FAVORITE STRATEGIES....?

In MCA mode, I use a lot of transforming to run and hide like a little girl. Then if I see a weaker player like lohn Jack, I'll pop out of hiding and cap his no skill butt. This is a good strategy for padding your score. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of weak players around here.

# BDB GIVNIN. TECH SUPPORT -

FAVORITE WEAPONS --- > On foot: Either the Shotgun or the Energy Grenades. Both guns are very powerful with limited drawbacks, and both are great for long range or close up attacks. MCA mode: My favorite gun, hands down, is the Juggernaut. Fast, powerful and great for long or short range attacks. FAVORITE STRATEGIES --- > I run in circles and try to maneuver myself behind the opponent for the attack. And if that doesn't work. I always can rely on the head-to-head match to the death.

### CRAIG HUBBARD, GAME DESIGNER AND LEAD LEVEL DESIGNER ightarrow



FAVORITE WEAPONS----

FAVORITE WEAPONS—?
The Bullgut. There's nothing quite like double jumping and raining corkscrew missiles down on the heads of your enemies.

FAVORITE STRATEGIES—}
In general, my favorite strategy is to kick the crap out of everybody else in the game.

### CHARLES WES SAULSBERRY III, LEAD TEXTURE ARTIST 6 DESIGNER >



MCA mode: Gotta agree with John, the Bullgut is the most fun, but the RedRiot and Juggernaut help the frag counts. FAVORITE STRATEGIES --- > In city levels, I like to stay atop the buildings to keep the high ground, so to speak; using the architecture as much as possible, looking for sniper spots, I also use vehicle mode as much as possible. With on-foot levels. a fun tactic is to shoot the Kato Grenade into rooms - it'll get somebody (and piss 'em off!). lust stand back far enough that you don't get in its way.

### MIKE DUSSAULT, LEAD LITHTECH ENGINEER $\Rightarrow$





When they're busy fighting some other fragger...



...it's the best time to sneak up and do a closerange bullet rattle for a big surprise.

use is the shotgun - especially a head shot from behind, Cheezy? Sure, but definitely entertaining. Other basic tips apply here as well-the usual things like knowing the level and where the respawns are at, don't shoot area affect weapons close to your person (duh!), and again, don't stop moving! With

the release of the Shogo point patch, the Internet play actually works. Of course, you got the patch long ago, but if not, hop to it now. It includes not just massive improvements in the net play, but single player fixes and some new deathmatch maps as well. To find games going on over the Internet. GameSpy is your best bet, although you'll probably want to download the latest version of the program since the one included on the Shogo CD is a bit dated by now.



The Assault Rifle is a great close or long range weapon. Cap those dirty snipers!

### THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

SHOGO'S ARMORY AND THEIR DAMAGE



30.0





SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

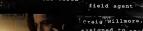
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field agent



assigned to assist

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But beware,

this game contains material that may be objectionable to some people.

Mainly, the folks at the FBI.



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PRICE--> \$149 SRF INTERFACE--- USB, ser API SUPPORT--- DirectX 5.0, I-Force 2.0 BUNDLE--> No PROGRAMMABLE...) Yes

00

ove it or hate it, force feedback is here to stay. Stores have been flooded with half a dozen motorized driving wheels, a third wiggling joystick, and even a moving mouse, and that's in the last year alone. If you've ever grabbed on to one of those in-store-demo Microsoft SideWinder Force Feedback sticks. you've gotta admit it was cool to feel the machine-gun and bumpyterrain effects through the shuddering joystick.

Clunky gears were the biggest problem with those sticks, but Logitech has addressed that. The WingMan Force is smooth, its cable drive system is powerful enough to give your hand a healthy yank, yet so tender it can carry its fragile eggs for miles in its powerful jaws - er, that is, it's so sensitive it can convey the whisper of wind shear with precision. Finally, a joystick that is both sensitive and precise.

Don't worry about whether your sound card's game port will be compatible with the WingMan Force; this stick doesn't use it. Instead, upgrade to Windows 98 and brush off your USB ports they're the two thin notches next to the mouse and keyboard ports

on the back of the computer. If you don't have USB ports, you'll have to use the Force's emergency backup, a nine-pin serial interface, which causes a noticeable degradation in response.

The beastly base of the Force. intended for two-handed operation, will displace your keyboard. (The large size of the base is good for gaming, but is problematic when you want to use your keyboard at the same time.) Your left hand lies on a contoured rest with

five pro-

grammable

buttons at your fingertips, and your right hand is treated to the immaculate Logitech grip. Just in case you're unfamiliar with the WingMan grip, it's the best in the industry; no other joystick even comes close to matching the hand-hugging comfort of this legendary handle.

The Force comes adorned with a POV hat, four stick buttons, five left-finger buttons, and a throttle wheel under the left thumb. All these features are easy to configure in any DirectInputcompliant game, and for other titles Logitech includes a profile program that lets you map keystrokes to buttons This baby rocks force feedback



games, and it's a pretty good performer in non-force feedback titles. The stick uses virtual springs (its cable-driven feedback motor takes the place of real springs) for adjustable tension in non-force feedback games, but the result is a slightly mushy and uneven feel. On the other hand, the Wing. Man's still a whole bunch better

store shelves The Logitech WingMan Force is a mammoth leap in the realm of force feedback, taking the technology out of its infancy and into a far more mature product. If you've been waiting for the right force feedback stick to come

than most of the also-ran con-

trollers currently cluttering up

### HOW'S IT PLAY?

GOOD FORCE FEEDBACK: IT'S MORE THAN JUST THE STICK

though force feedback controllers sbuted almost two years ago, they still even't made much of a splash. Some lks claim that the right force feedback evice has yet to come out, but all the icks and wheels on the market perforn dequately — if the force feedback part

idlo make it simp thuds into game back part of the ga



he stick's pressure against your eeps you in touch with the moto le's center of balance. In Europe

### **HEAD TO HEAD**

The Logitach WingWan Force and the Microsoft SideWinder Force Feedback Pro are clearly the two leading force feedback joysticks on the market today. Each offers an anhanced gaming experience compared with regular joysticks — but which of the two is better? We tested both joysticks haded haded and here are our results.

BUTTONS OTHER CONTROLS LOOKS FORCE FEEDBACK NON-FF GAMES PROFILER INTERFACE USB, serial

Awesome, Best in industry Nine, well placed Hat and throttle Hug, and bulbous Best yet Kinda mushy

SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK PRO Very good. Big improvement over first-generation MS sticks Eight, with a Shift button doubling functionality, but who's gonna use it? Also, poorly placed thumb buttons

Hat, throttle, and rudder Sleck and black Clunky but off, ctiv ne port, but not all sound cards are compatible

along, this is it.



-> Best force feedback yet

Minuses



-> Huge footprint Serial connection is not nearly as good as the USB connection

### Quantum3D Raven

A typical Quantum3D high-end card? Ouoth the Raven, "Nevermore"

PRICE--> \$149 SRP CHIPSET--> Voodgo Banshe PAMINA 16MR

API SUPPORT--- Direct3D, Glide, OpenGl BUNDLE--- Rush the Rock Alcotraz Edition GEX; Enter the Gecko, and NFL Blitz

his is not your daddy's Ouantum3D card. Most folks will remember the Obsidian line as the quintessential Quantum3D product - dual

Voodoo 2 on a single board. It was 3Dfx on steroids: high-powered, incredibly fast, and totally unaffordable (\$500).

Although it can't compete with

dual Voodoo 2 or TNT-based solutions, the good news is that with a street price of \$110 to \$120, the latest offering from Quantum Is well within the average gamer's budget. The Raven is a Banshee-based card available in AGP 1X and PCI versions, and it's compatible with the vast majority of 3Dfx Glide, Direct<sub>3</sub>D, and OpenGL ICD titles.

### THE BANSHEES

voocoo Banshee boards are all remark ably similar. How do you decide which one to buy? Consider factors such as company history (for driver updates), and the software bundle, which may be the only major difference between very similar sortions.

GUILLEMOT
MAXI GAMER PHOENIX
At a mere \$90, Guillemot's Banshee card
may be the best value in 3D acceleration
BUNDLE—\*\* Tonic Trouble (full), Half-Life
Day One, plus several demos

DIAMOND MUNISTER F-USION
Diamond is the king of consumer 3D
accelerators, with awesome driver support, but this card costs around \$120
BUNDLE—">Unreal (demo with exclusiv
DM levels) and Motocross Modness

DUANTUMED RAVEN Available for as low as \$105 online, Raven should have good driver supp BUNDLE---> Midway's Gex, Rush the Rock, and NFL Biltz (full games)

3D BLASTER BANSHEE
Creative has a lot of sound card muscle,
but its driver support for video cards is BUNDLE---} Two nongame graphical apps. Why bother?

METABYTE
WICKEDBD VENGEANCE
A retail price of S119 means a street
price of under \$100, but Metabyte is
new to the consumer graphics card bus
ness so driver support is unpredictable
BUNDLE.... None



After we installed the card, the default gamma settings left our screen with a pink hue, but that was easily remedied with the display settings applet. Desktop acceleration was speedy and crisp, characteristic of 3Dfx's first 2D effort.

The Rayen scored a bit better in our benchmarks than Metabyte's Wicked 3D Vengeance, but not enough to make a major impact. In fact, speed and image quality are almost identical between the two cards.

Like other Banshee cards, the Raven is a no-frills solution whose primary strength lies in its awesome price-for-performance ratio. There's no TV out or anything fancy like that; it's a single-slot solution for gamers on a budget who don't

want to compromise performance. With Quantum constantly releasing new drivers (it was on 1.2 at press time - that's two updates to the shipping driver software), the card is supported quite well.

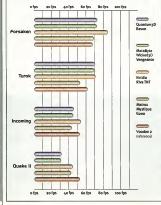
The Raven adds a bit of value with its modest but entertaining bundle. The Midway games Rush the Rock Alcatraz Edition, Gex: Enter the Gecko, and NFL Blitz offer a bit of eye candy for showing off your new graphics card. Regardless, affordability remains the Raven's strongest feature.



One of the bundled titles is the arcade football game NEI Blitz

### THE 3D ACCELERATOR FACE-OFF

Like other Banshee cards, the Raven is well worth its modest price, but with no multitexturing games like Quake II won't perform. The test machine: A PII 300 running on a 100MHz 440BX with 64MB 10ns SDRAM, running Wing8 OSR2 B with DirectX 6.0.



### JARGONATOR

Stands for accelerated graphics port. AGs offers high-bandwidth access to system RAM for the purpose of transferring textures to and from the large amount of sto age found there.

0

BANDWIDTH
The width of the pipe data travels through
Bandwidth is different from clock speed.
Think of data traveling through your syste
as vehicles traveling on a freeway. Clock
speed represents how fast the cars travel,
while bandwidth represents the number o
lanes in the freeway.

CLOCK SPEED computers operate in cycles. In a single cycle, a computer performs its full range of functions; then the next cycle begins. Cycles are measured in hertz (titz) and the measurement is referred to as the frequency. The clock speed of computer components is measured in megahertz, with a higher number indicating a faster component. As in most cases (other than golf), higher number a faster.

DIMM MDDULE
Stands for dual inline memory module
The heir of the long-standing standar
SIMM (single inline memory module)
DIMMs offer greater bandwidth for fa
memory transfer.

PC IDD RAM DIMMs that operate at 100MHz. Most SIMMS and non-PC 100 DIMMs opera 66MHz, with a theoretical maximum of B3MHz. Basically, PC 100 RAM mea faster memory, which is better.

HITRA DMA

OLT FOLLOWA A relatively new, fast standard for IDE hard drive interfacing that allows direct hard drive-to-memory access without the need for the data to go through the processor. The cliows Ultra DMA devices to reach data transfer speeds near those of SCSI devices.

USB

Universal serial bus. A new alternative to the relatively slow serial and parallel ports. USB allows to stropping, which means that you can plug in USB devices while a PC is on and Windows 96 will recopping the minmediately. Theoretically, up to 27 USB requires Wingo is being conjuncted, but the computer, USB requires Wingo is biggest falling so fart, though if we reynone eventually adopts Wingo, USB devices will be used more and will be more appealing generally.



-> Lots of value for the price → Supports most 3D titles
→ Decent game bundle

### Minuses



-> No TV out







Only Eidos challenges your imagination!



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**EIDOS** 

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 25

### Building up your ...

A quick guide to everything you need to get through the coming year and into the new millennium

### Machine for 1999

he new year is upon us, and before we get caught up in end-ofmillennium hysteria, it's time to take our holiday money and pump up our PCs to get us through 1999.

If you've got a clone in an ATX tase, you're ready to go, but don't ty to upgrade built-to-fit-the-proprietary-motherboard cases like Compaq, Packard Bell, and other Sears special brands. While you can toss in some extra RAM, a dedicated 3D card, and maybe a processor upgrade, you're pretty much stuck with the specs you have. Sorry!



### MOTHERBOARD -->

Your motherboard/processor combination is what, for the most part, determines the speed and power of your system. The biggest rule of thumb is, Don't skimp on the motherboard Get a namebrand board such as Asus, Abit, Tyan, Supermitro, or FIL. If you go with an off brand, what you save in cash you'll lose in support headaches, lack of BIOS undates and driver revisions, and other problems.

Socket 7 may be hanging on for dear life with AMD K6-2 chips, but it'll die soon. Get a Pentium II board with an Intel BX chipset so you can run it at 100MHz and keep your processor up-to-date throughout the year.

### PROCESSOR →

As of this writing, the Pentium II
450 is the fastest chip on the market. Since we're looking at a solution that will last at least a year,
you might as well spring for one. If

you think you can fork over the cash for an upgrade a few months from now, though, you might want to grab a fast Celeron A chip now though the cache is limited compared with that of the PII, it runs faster. Then save up your dough for later in the year, when faster Pentium II chips hit the Street.



### RAM -->

Right now, PC 100 in 168-pin DIMM modules is the only way to go. Don't bother with EDO RAM, since it only operates at a maximum of 83MHz.

You'll need a minimum of 64MB of RAM, but since the price is pretty low you might as well go for 128MB. That's sure to get you through the year, but leave a DIMM slot open for upgrades — just in case.

### S --->

If you haven't upgraded to Windows 98, go buy yourself a copy, it's the only way to go for reliable AGP and USB support, AGP is firmly rooted in the gaming industry and USB is gaining ground rapidly. A greatly streamlined driver layer and, for the first time in a Microsoft OS, useful troubeshooting tools. Windows zooo is coming soon and looks like the best choice for the future.



### HARO ORIVE →

Space is always a problem, especially with games requiring 200-plus MB a pop. Go big, as big as you can afford; six, eight, even 10 GB will disappear faster than you'd believe.

Ultra DMA is an affordable alternative to SCSI, considering that it's 30MB-per-second burst rate is damn near Ultra Wide SCSI's 40MB-per-second burst. Any respectable PII motherboard will have Ultra DMA support built into its IDE controller.

### VIDEO CARD →

As mentioned last issue, a TNT/Voodoo 2 combo is a surefire winner. Even if you can't afford both, a Voodoo 2 is virtually required material. Glide support is still important, and no other card can do OpenGL games like a Voodoo 2 - yet. For maximum performance, go for an SLI configuration (see sidebar "SLI with Anything").



### SDUND CARD ->

Pretty soon, 3D sound will be required by law. OK, maybe not, but support for it is built into nearly every game coming out. A3D is by far the most popular and widely supported standard, but Creative Labs' SoundBlaster Live! with EAX has gained a following.

Most games that support one will support the other, and each has its advantages. EAX sounds more convincing with four speakers, but that many speakers can be inconvenient in a cramped room. A3D-based cards sound mighty realistic with merely two sneakers.

The choice is yours, but one thing's for sure: If you're still limping along with a SoundBlaster 16, it's time to get 3D.



### SPEAKERS -->

Cambridge SoundWorks series. 'Nuff said.

Well, not quite enough. CSW offers three sets of the top PC speakers on the market. The biggest, and most expensive, is MicroWorks (\$429,), and respectively smaller and cheaper are SoundWorks (\$59) and PCWorks (\$49). All these sets offer the very best sound you can buy in their price range.

### SLI WITH ANYTHING



Metabyte's Wicked 3D Voodoo 2 board is truly the slut of the SLI community. That's not a bad fitting: It just means that the 12MB board will support SLI mode with, according to the company, virtually any other 12MB Voodoo 2 board on the market. Otherwise you must SLI your Voodoo 2 card with an exect match from its manufacturer. Metabyte makes it tempting by offer-in a Wirkshoft for a more Science. Jower

ands. While SLI bundle deals are ards. While SLI bundle deals are ards. While SLI bundle deals are ards. While SLI bundle deals are string to creep up, Metabyte is going a lock on those gamers who bought a odoo a board last year and are saving for a second one. The board also wrks with WickedVision glasses.

card to offer this compatibility, and it only works with 12MB Voodoo 2 boards. If you want to SLI an BMB board, you need another BMB board from the same manufacturer, but if ye want to SLI a 12MB board, you can us either a Witched 30 12MB board or an exact counterpart from the manufacturer of your first board.

# **MAKE YOUR OWN DAMN ROAD!**



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Be reasonable: This report is not meant to encourage drinking and driving. It is our official stance that anyone who drinks and drives should be tied to the door of Oprah's lunchroom right before the show's noon break. This feature intends to show the harmful effects of drinking on people's driving abilities, and also intends to show that if you do choose do drink and drive, you should only do it in a game.

iends don't let friends drive drunk, but they do let them play driving games drunk, right? Even though alcohol-related traffic deaths have dropped 36% since 1982, the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration says that one out of every five people will be involved in an alcohol-related automobile accident. Those are some pretty scary numbers, but we couldn't trust them until we ran a few tests ourselves

We've all watched the news. we've all seen the driver's education films, and, heck, we've all been cut off by some idiot who's had too much to drink, but few of us know what it's like to be on the driver's side of the steering wheel still buzzed (or at least we hope only a few of us know this feeling). In an effort to show the bad effects of drinking and driving (and, more important, in an effort to find a way to expense beer), we decided to test the effects of drinking on driving games. The results of this experiment speak for themselves







### THE PARTICIPANTS

In the interest of science, these participants reluctantly agreed to stay late at the office, drink beer, and play driving games. Their contribution to the scientific world should not be underestimated. Guinea pigs, we applaud you.

### CALIFORNIA ....



OUOTE-> "It's only a race for PREFERRED EXCUSE FOR BAD DRIVING

"I'm so far ahead it doesn't matter"

## NEW YORK STATE

DRIVER LICENSE Edward Lee somen

QUOTE- "lust kickin" it on the PREFERRED EXCUSE FOR BAD DRIVING "You guys are trying to keep me down"



SUBJECT 1: ROB SMITH

INITIAL BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL-> 00 FINAL BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL - 12

PERSONALITY CHANGES -- The normally

mild-mannered Rob Smith became more

aggressive and more arrogant as the evening

wore on, taunting opponents and espousing

DRINKS -> Two 40-ouncers, three beers, two

PERSONALITY CHANGES -> With each drink.

Ed traveled further down the road toward

becoming a West Coast gangster rap artist

paranoia, and strangely enough, toward

SOBER DRIVING STYLE→ Cautious 

the greatness of Blade, the racer

SUBJECT 2: ED LEE

DRINKING STYLE-> The Lirban Rave

INITIAL REGOD ALCOHOL LEVEL-) .04

FINAL BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL -> 14

DRUNK DRIVING STYLE-> Erration

DRINKING STYLE-> The Frat Party DRINKS -> Six beers and two shots

PERSONALITY CHANGES -- Dan, who was forced to drink Zima the entire evening, just got more bitter as the hours passed

### CALIFORNIA ....



OUOTE--- "Where's my Zima? Did I just say that? I can't believe I just said that' PREFERRED EXCUSE FOR BAD DRIVING-"I can't find my Zima"

### CALIFORNIA .... SURJECT 4: MIKE SALMON



with one hand — cran I hit a school hus PREFERRED EXCUSE FOR BAD DRIVING-"I didn't do anything wrong, what happened. What happened?"

### DRINKING STYLE-> The Bar Fiend DRINKS-) Eight Beers, three shots of lager-

meister, one wine cooler, a sin of Zima, and INITIAL BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL--> 08 FINAL BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL-> .17 SOBER DRIVING STYLE-> Unable to determine since he was never sobe as "driving

PERSONALITY CHANGES --- Mike was already legally drunk before the match started, so it was difficult to gauge any personality changes. We did notice that as he became more drunk, he tended to use the word 'baby" much more frequently

### THE DRINKS

Since we had such a diversity of drinking Since we had such a diversity of drinking styles, we needed to have a large amount of alcohol on the primises. However, the law prohibits us from drinking at work, so please understand that the following list of alcohol is not an admission of suits have a decident of the such as admission of suits have a decident that the sion of guilt, just a random list of bever-ages that may possibly have been con-sumed as part of a vital scientific study.

- Budweisers Country Club Malt Liquors 40 oz.
- Henry Weinhard's beers Zimas 12 Bartles and James Wine Coolers bottle Jagermeister Various airline bottles of liquoi
- Total cost of

expensed liquor: \$68

### BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVELS EXPLAINED

- .04 -> Behavior normal
- 04 .06 --) Ability (and willingness) to dance greatly enhanced
- .08 .10  $\Rightarrow$  Legally drunk in most states: Head moves slower than eyes .10 .12  $\Rightarrow$  Legally drunk in all states: Finally gets the blonde/breathaly.cer joke .12 .14  $\Rightarrow$  Words begin to slur, dancing greatly impaired but also more frequent
- 14 .16 Bulletproof: Nothing can touch subject; he is the king of the world
- ing, must be carried from bar to bar (by fat, ugly brunette chick)
- 25 .30 --) Passed out (but fantasizing about last human seen male or female)) -- Blind or dead

### THE GAMES

In order to test fully the effects of all those expensed beers, we had to choose a variety of driving styles to pitch each participant in. Ranging from the real world (Driver's Education '99) to the realistic (Grand Prix Legends) to the very beta (Viper Racina), the games accommodated all styles and aggression factors.

DRIVER'S EDUCATION '99 Why we chose it -> It was a natural choice. When one of our editors attended driver's education in high school, his instructor continually reeked of alcohol (and looked down a girl student's shirt, but that's beside the point). Now it's time for a little revenge.

NEED FOR SPEED TIT-HOT PURSUIT

Why we chose it → It's easy to get started, looks great, and seems to be the game the test subjects. could follow best when they were entirely drunk. Let's face it, who doesn't want to get behind the wheels of these high-end racers?

VIPER RACING (beta build) Why we chose it -> The cars in Viper Racina have realistic body damage, making this game the perfect choice to show the financial cost of driving drunk.

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS Why we chose it -> Such is the degree of realism of these monstrous 1967 Formula One racing machines that none of the subiects could drive the game very well sober, so we were hoping that somehow it was easier if the subiects were drunk (we never said we were bright).

### THE GAMES WE DIDN'T USE:

### CARMAGEDDON II

Despite its natural fit for this feature, we did not use Carmageddon // because the early version we have does not support steering wheels

TEST DRIVE: OFF-ROAD II Although most of the subjects drunk driving was actually offroad, this game was not in the office soon enough for them to try some legitimate dirt driving.

### WHAT WE REALLY WANTED:

THE NEED FOR OFF ROAD VIPER SCHOOLAGEDDON The perfect drinking and driving game would be an amalgamation of our favorite racing games. It would have the control of NFS III, the acceptable off-road driving of Test Drive, the body damage of Viner Racing, and the pedestrians of Carmageddon, all set in one awesome driving school. That would be the perfect PCXL racer.

### THE TESTING DEVICE

To ensure that we knew the exact point at which the test sub jects were truly driving drunk, each subject was tested using Guardian Interlock's P.A.L. This handheld vice tests blood ohol levels in a tter of minutes. first test (on Subject 4) resulted in a blood ohol level of .34 which generally causes death or per causes death or per-manent blindness. We quickly learned that you are not supposed to take the test imme-diately after drinking beer and eventually got the testing right While nearly render blind, Subject 4,





### SOBER TESTS

A proper scientific study is carefully conducted with both a control group and a study group. Since we didn't want to share our expensed beer with anyone else, we decided to be both groups ourselves. Our first study began as we tested each driver's skills and abilities while he was completely sober (where possible, that is). The findings were as follows:

### THE FIRST TEST: DRIVER'S EDUCATION '99

SUBJECT 1 --- A careful driver who lost points for driving on the wrong side of the road. Appeal denied even though he is British Score → 75

SUBJECT 2 --- > Drove a little fast, hit 34 mph in a school zone, made instructor yell "my kids go to that school\* Score -> 88 SUBJECT 3 -- > Refused to

check mirrors or even windows Score --> 52 (failed) SUBJECT 4-> Subject already drinking. Belligerently chose not to listen to instructor, ran through red light, and sideswiped a pickup truck

Score -- > oo (failed)

### THE SECOND TEST: VIPER RACING

SUBJECT 1 --- Staved safe, occasionally brushing side of car along guardrails Score -> Sixth place Repair costs -> \$4,800 (body work and paint) SUBJECT 2 -- Risky driving

resulted in a high finish, and the occasional bumping of fenders Score --> Third place Repair costs -> \$23,500 SUBJECT 3 -- > Ultra-careful driving resulted in no body damage but a last-place finish

Score -> Eighth (last) place Repair costs -> Wimpy racer upgraded car with custom shift knob (\$95), trunk top luggage rack (\$237), set of four headlight cover nuts (\$49). Total of worthless upgrades: \$381

SUBJECT 4 -> Test subject yelled "Get out of my way, you idiots" before driving his car into two others Score → Eighth place (disqualified

within seconds) Repair costs --> Three totaled Dodge Vipers: \$216,429

### THE THIRD TEST: NEER FRR SPEER III

SUBJECT 1 --- Smart driving led to a first-place finish Score --> First place (best lap: 1 minute 45 seconds)

SUBJECT 2 -> An aggressive move halfway through the first lap resulted in a first-place position that was held throughout the race Score -> First place (best lap: 1 minute 48 seconds)

SUBJECT 3 -> Balanced driving managed a top finish Score -> First place (best lap: 1 minute 48 seconds) SUBJECT 4--- Despite the early

stages of inebriation, this test subject used some brazen driving moves to come in first. Score -> First place (best lap: 1 minute 52 seconds)



Subject three learned the hard lesson of never passing your opponent in the air, at the cost of his scalp.



SUBJECT 1 -- > Stayed in with pack until first tight corner and then violently wrecked SUBJECT 2 -- > Ditto SUBJECT 3 --- Ditto SUBJECT 4 --- Jumped the gun and rammed into three other cars awaiting the start

After a short discussion it was determined that Grand Prix Legends was far too sim-oriented for the staff to care about. However, as first drinks were consumed, the test subjects challenged each other to see who could create the biggest auto wreck. Further discussion revolved around "fixing" report data to reveal better Grand Prix Legends scores than actually occurred for each of the subjects. In the end we decided that for the sake of science such "fibbing" would ruin the results of the test.

### THE DRINKING

To make sure we covered drinking and driving games to the very fullest, we had each of our editors try a different style of drinking.

SUBJECT 1--- Used the traditional frat party style of drinking. He focused his drinking on cheap beers and Jagermeister. Subject 1 also hit on any cheerleaders that walked in during the test. SUBJECT 2 -> Only drank forties of malt liquor at first, but later migrated to other beers and the occasional shot of airline whiskey. SUBJECT 3 --- Was the unfortunate soul who had to show the effects of getting "girl-drink drunk." Despite his continual complaints, Subject 3 could only drink Zima or





### LESSONS LEARNED

During the drinking and driving session, the test subjects were able to crash and burn in the polygonal environments of the racing games. And, thankfully, a few things showed just how badly drinking affects reasoning skills.

### Things that seem possible while drunk driving that are, in fact, not possible

PASSING ON THE SHOULDER --->
Every attempt to do this in Need for
Speed III resulted in either a car flipped Speed III resulted in eliner a compo-on its roof or a nasty wipeout DOING ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER SEEN ON "DUKES OF HAZZARD" —> The sub-jects tried many of the best "Dukes" driving maneuvers in Viper Racing, but the only part they successfully accomplished was yelling "Yeehaw!"
ONE-WAY STREET AS A SHORTCUT ----ONE-WAY STRET AS A SHORTCUT "">
Sterra's persinctedy driving instructor veiled at Subject 3 when he tried this move, distracting him while a police car plowed into his front grill DRINKING WHILE DRIVING "">
DRINKING WHILE DRIVING "">
DRIVING WHILE DRIVING ""

TALKING OUT OF TICKETS "">
DRIVING WHILE DRIVING "">
DRIVING WHILE DRIVING "">
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TALKING OUT OF TICKETS "">
DRIVING WHILE DRIVING ""

TALKING OUT OF TICKETS "">
DRIVING WHILE DRIVING ""

TALKING OUT OF TICKETS ""

THE DRIVING ""

THE DR Subjects tried and tried, but the NFS III cops could not be swayed SOUNDING TOUGH TO CELLMATE.

The logical result of the last failure

Things that seem possible while drinking that are, in fact, not possible

- understandable punch line...

  » Doxing suare mattaining that study demeanor...

  » In many the man that study demeanor...

  » Impressing the chick next to you with your ability to burp the alphabet...

  » Winning at pool...

  » Judging the correct amount of a tip...

  » Saying the word "linoleum"

Things you shouldn't say to a cop when pulled over for DUI

"I just finished my last beer, do you "Everything's fine, as long as you don't theck the trunk." "Aren't you one of those guys from the Village People? "

"Do you got any mail for me Cliff" "Wow, I didn't think your cruiser o it 130 under these conditions!" hit 330 under these conditions
"Am I going to be on "Cops?"
"Oops, I didn't realize my radar detector
wasn't plugged in."
"You think I'm bad now, you should have

### 2/3



### THE CONTROLLERS

We also managed to put four steering wheels to the test during the course of the racing. Here's how they fared. ACT LABS RS

ACT LABS RS

THE WHEEL --> Great feel and grip, but
the overall control is not as tight as the
other wheels tested

THE FEDALS --> Study and easy to use,
but the pedals are a little close together,
on the subject's drought deficiently

THE FIGHS --> Will also work with your
videogame console, thanks to special
cartridges that can be purchased from
the manufacture.

the manufacturer
THE LOWS ---) Control feels a little sloppy, and base does not lock to the desktop very tightly

MICROSOFT SIDEWINDER FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL

FIGNER FEEDBACK WHEEL

\*\*Pices Spage
\*\*Pices

THRUSTMASTER SPRINT

THRUSTMASTER SPRINT

THE WHEEL 3— profice 5yp

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### GUILLEMOT RACE LEADER FORCE FEEDBACK

FÖRCE FÉEDBACK

THE WHEEL — Feels cheap, but fore
redacks added to the gaming experience at least until we were drunk
THE FDALS — Base not big enough
and pedals too close together
THE HIGHS — Frore feedback and
plenty of programmable buttons
THE LOWS — Proor pedal design and
soution caps lineted of desig and

wine coolers. Shortly after the test, Subject 3 began to crave Bette Midler movies, Celine Dion music. and episodes of "Party of Five." SUBJECT 4 -- Was already drunk at the beginning of the test and chose his own style of drinking, which apparently meant drinking anything and everything that crossed his path.

### THE RESULTS After drinking for the rest of the

evening, the subjects were able to gather themselves together for administering the final blood alcohol and driving tests.







### THE FIRST TEST: DRIVER'S EDUCATION '99

It was quickly discovered that none of the test subjects would be able to pass the driving school test in the state they were in. So the free driving mode was turned on, and each subject was encouraged to drive as freely as possible. But safety was a major concern.

driver declared U.S. driving rules unfit and proceeded to drive on the wrong side of the road until he met an unfortunate end in a head-on collision with an ambulance Score -- Failure SUBJECT 2 -- Managed

SUBJECT 1-> The once-careful

to attain a top speed of 83 mph before reaching the highway and his unfortunate end, courtesy of the front bumper of a northbound diesel trailer

Score -- Failure SUBJECT 3--- Tried to drive

into the vard of a school that the driving instructor claimed his children attended. Stopped by poor game design and a curb that destroyed his car's suspension Score -> Failure

SUBJECT 4 -- Now very drunk and very belligerent, Rammed police car, failed test, spent 30 years in Sierra's Maximum Security Prison Simulator '99 as Leisure Suit Larry's





It took Subject 1 a good 15 minutes to realize that the steering wheel just wasn't going to work in Rainbow Six.

personal bitch. Quite humiliating Score -> Really, really bad failure

### THE SECOND TEST: VIPER RACING

SUBJECT 1 --- > Drove for 36 seconds before flipping the car on its top and retiring for another beer Score -> Eighth place (disqualified and pretty banged up)

Repair costs → \$72,143 SUBJECT 2 -> Drove for 27 seconds before wiping out both sides of car and destroying the entire front end

Score → Eighth place (disqualified and quite disgruntled) Repair costs → \$72,143

### THE DISTRACTION

Somewhere in the middle of the drinking and driving study the subjects decided to try the ir luck at a bit of drunk Rainbow Six. The results, like the results for the drinking and driving study, showed just how impaired the test subjects had become.

6:15 - Subject 2 asks to play Rainbow Six
6:19 - Subject 2 asks if he asked everyone to play Rainbow Six

649 — 5 Windord 2 and 1 the native compare to plant Partition Visit.
640 — 6 and of subjects could require and use or to conscious conditions) plant game
640 — 6 and of subjects a rank of subjects as the plant of the subjects as the plant of the subjects as the plant of the subject is a rank of plant of the subject is a rank of plant of the subject is a rank of the sub

5-38 --- Subjects 2 and 3 change names to PCXL Tattoo and PCXL Ricardo Montelbon 6-39 --- Stkj lokes about a midget and an aging, smarmy actor fill the chat lines 6-40 --- Subject 2 is TKed from behind, but Subject 3 spots Subject 4 as the shooter

604 > Mean production for so Superior Lens Subjects
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Mrs. Hardgrove's second grade class got a field trip they would never forget...to the burn ward.

SUBJECT 3 -> Drove for 29 seconds before driving his damaged Viper into a lake.

Score -> Fighth place (disqualified)

Score → Eighth place (disqualified)
Repair costs → \$72,143
SUBJECT 4 → Spun out and
rolled down cliff before crossing
the starting line.
Score → Eighth place (disqualified)

Repair costs → \$72,143

### THE THIRO TEST: NEED FOR SPEED III

Subjects decided that racing against the computer was no fun (and frankly a bit unfair considering their states of consciousness), so they focused solely on racing each other. Unfortunately, the scorekeeper was also drunk by this time and final scores were badly kept.

SUBJECT 1 → New aggressiva racing style was very effective, and loud taunting of opponents proved a valuable addition to Subject 1's racing skills. As evening progressed, Subject 1 renamed law enforcement officers "pigs" and renamed opponents "losers 2 through a"

SUBJECT 2 -> Erratic driving often cost Subject 2 big leads, but his gutsy driving and willingness to pass while flipping through the air ensured several first-place finishes (we think) SUBJECT 3 -> The effect of too

SUBJECT 3 -> The effect of too many Zimas was not pretty. Subject 3 had difficulties handling his vehicle on straight stretches, corners, and any part of the track that was neither straight stretches nor corners.

SUBJECT 4 -> After blood alcohol shot up to .17, Subject 4, 4 became a hazard not only to his fellow racers but to the game's oncoming raffic swell. After head-on collisions with a taxl, several random cars, three sport-utility vehicles, and a school bus full of children, the subject was determined unfit to drive, even in a wideogame. You can still see the timp liastic-produced cuts on his forehead from repeated crashes

### THE CONCLUSION

The results of the test clearly show that alcohol is extremely defirmental to driving, even in games. And frankly we were a little relieved; we don't know what kind of pressure we would have gotten if the results had shown that it actually improved driving. Considering how badly the subjects drove near the end of this experiment, society is far better off with this lesson well learned.

### THE ORIVE HOME

SUBJECT 1— Called girlfriend, rode home in style SUBJECT 2 — Called taxi, rode home in flea-infested cab SUBJECT 3— Stept on floor under desk until the next morning SUBJECT 4— Not tired, called girlfriend, bought tickets to Las Vegas, lost \$225 not counting plane tickets fure story



While sober, passing on the road seems like the right choice. While drunk, other options seemed possible.





The State Troopers in Need For Speed III weren't buying any of our attempts at bribery.





Mild Das States of MPR 10 MPR Mild Das States of MPR 10 MPR Maifiger O Makada St MPR - 00 MPR Land Poot O Makada SO MPR - 03 MPR

### Amen: The Awakening

No. it's not based on the '80s sitcom - more like The X-Files

k, so if the 3D action genre wasn't competitive enough before Holf-Life, "The Game With the 10 Rating" has now raised the bar significantly higher. Cavedog is aware of the expectation level in this genre, so their upcoming game Amen: The Awokening is presenting the most interesting single-player first-person experience thus far - on paper anyway. Design lead/co-project lead Greg MacMartin is ready with the high concept description: "Picture a game with the immersiveness. attention to detail, and believability of environments of [Origin's] System Shock with the cinematic feel of Jedi Knight or Metol Geor Solid," he says. We're listening.

The single-player game is about immersing the player in Amen's realistic environments and storyline. That storyline is based on a dreaded cliché - the "post-apocalyptic future" - but with an inter-

### INFO BOX

RELEASE DATE → 02 '99

INTEREST GALIGE

### THE HYPE

Shooting for the moon - a post-Half-Life approach to game design.

### THE HURDLE

Sounds great on paper, but living up to the promises is gonna be tough.

### THE HIT

Cavedog produces quality games; chances are they'll take their time to make sure it's how they envisioned.



With Total Annihilation under its belt, Cavedog's already managed to set itself a high standard that fans are going to be expecting to be cemented with Amen.

esting twist. Instead of a nuclear war, the background involves trying to figure out exactly why 1/3 of earth's population became homicidal maniacs at exactly the same time - Christmas Eve of 2032. After "The Awakening," as it's called, the remaining sane population formed "safe zones" where they can live in relative peace, protected by the military. As SAS badass Bishop Six, a wisecracking



Humvees will be among the usable vehicles in the game.

commando (presumably no relation to Duke or Col. Blade) you'll try to determine if this slaughter is an engineered conspiracy or the Biblical Armageddon, "The story is the game, and vice versa. We are trying to create the '50-hour lames Cameron movie' of computer games," explains MacMartin.

Cavedog expects the game to be played two different ways: Plowing through with sheer force mowing down everything in your path. which will make for a "very difficult" experience, or going the stealthy route, planning and thinking, which will still be very difficult. "Most players will undoubtedly find themselves using both methods interchangeably," says MacMartin, The action will take place over 17 "acts," essentially environments, some of which are made up of more than one level. These range from an aircraft carrier to a prison p. 58

### FIVE QUESTIONS

WHETHER THE TOPIC IS ZEN BUD-DHISM. TALK SHOW HOSTESSES SPREADING IT OR COMING OF AGE STORIES AROUT ORPHANED DEER CAVEDOG'S GREG MACMARTIN HAS AN OPINION.

### Q: What were some of the inspirations

for Amen? A: Novels like The Stond and Lucifer's Hommer, Movies like Star Wars, Bombi, Die Hord, the Bock to the Future films, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, the Indiana Jones films - you know, the usual.

### O: What is the sound of one has

clapping? A: It kind of sounds like a fart in the forest when nobody is around to hear it.

### Q: Who or what would you want to see fragged in real life?

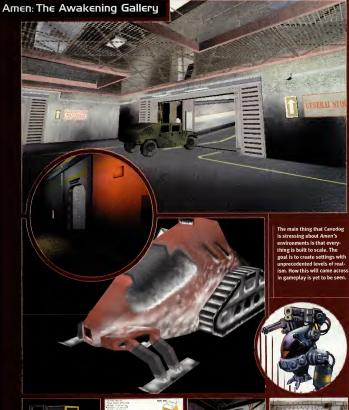
A: I would like to see Saddam get fragged by a tomahawk, awwww yeah.

### Q: What's the strangest thing you've ever searched for on a search engine? A: That would have to be nude pictures of Dr. Laura, /You too, huh?!

### Q: What's your feeling on the whole "when it's done" thing everyone seems to be doing? Good or bad? A: I think it's both good and bad. By not admitting to a release date, a company won't look had to the public if their game slips, which is a good thing for the company, but annoying for gamers because

they have no date to look forward to. if a release date is given, and is subsequently pushed back, gamers are also frustrated, because they have to walt longer to play the game they have been looking forward to. And these days, it seems like every 3D shooter misses their initial release date. And why is that? The reasons are surely different for every project, but they could range from a lack of a solid vision for the game. resulting in rewrites and scrapped designs, to a simple erroneous estima tion of how long it would take to implement something. I believe that the more innovative you try to be with something, the more difficult it is to predict when that something will be completed.

ACCELERATOR January 1999 Nude pictures of Dr Laura set an all-time one day download record...or maybe









The Amengine features tons of impressive-sounding terms like lightmapping, shadowing, dynamic lights, detail texturing, LOD, and a skelean (with full weighting of all vertices to as many bones as needed). This all means that stuff will look was cond when your shoot if way cool when you shoot it.



### LAST WORDS



The last word in the Bible is "Amen", s here are a few other, ahem, last words EVENT: PLANE CRASH

EVENT: WEDDINGS

LAST WORDS---} \*\*I do" [also see Plane

EVENT: RAINBOW SIX
LAST WORDS -- Y Just let me throw a
grenade"

EVENT: QUAKE II VERSUS THRESH LAST WORDS---} "Y..." (interrupted by death.)

EVENT: A DATE
LAST WORDS--> "What

P-55 complex and a faithful recreation of the Pittsburgh airport.

Creating environments that are readily identifiable to players has been a key concept in the level design process. Covering locations around the world, from the Arctic to the Congo, and, uh, Pittsburgh, plenty of variety is promised.

There's also going to be lots of puzzle solving, that is, tasks and objectives that rely more on your appreciation and understanding of your setting than any convoluted, forced tricks. A powerful interface system (yet to be fully implemented) will make controlling and manipulating the objects and environments simple but flexible.



Storytelling is vital to the game – so much so that if you were to destroy the storytelling elements, there wouldn't be a game left.

point includes "more than 20, less than 100" weapons, you'll have a device called the Lumen Micro-Console, a sort of communicator that will keep you in contact with HQ, Metal Gear Solid-style. Various specialists will give you advice and objectives throughout the game - this should lead to varied submissions involving weapon research, communications, as well as blowing shit up. The idea is to make you feel like you're part of a larger team. Usable vehicles will also be included, with Cavedog promising "more than two and less than 20." Uh - thanks.

Among the gear, which at this

So all this design stuff sounds great, but what kind of technology is pounding under the hood? It's



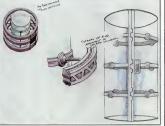
by definition it's state of the art since it's still being worked on as we speak. "The engine was designed specifically for this game. The game design was finished before one line of code was written, which allowed us to design for the game, which, after all, is the goal," says lead programmer Jonathan Mayor, Armed with all the 3D engine buzzwords you can shake an inanimate object at, the important thing to note is what kind of stuff the team envisions for the game. Here's an example: With the engine's ability to render huge outdoor areas to scale, you'll be able to look out of the window of a huge building (like an airport) and see to the horizon, then bust out of the window, jump outside, and walk there. The entire world is built to scale? Like, uh, you sure that's really necessary? Yeesh. The shipping product will include their 3D editor called Eden, which Mac-Martin claims "can create anything and everything you can imagine." Does that include Jenny McCarthy and a hot tub full of Jello?

Cavedog has been very successful with multiplayer in the past, and that's at least partly due to its

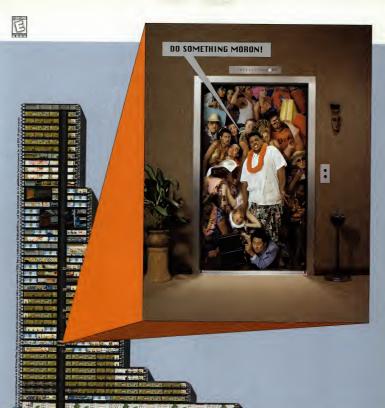
dedicated online group who architect the client/server models. Amen will be playable on Boneyards, Cavedog's proprietary online service, as well as through traditional standalone servers. Due to the importance of using items, Amen multiplayer will allow for a lot more strategy than standard deathmatch, according to Mac-Martin. In true Cavedog fashion. the team is talking about releasing a series of free downloadable weapons and equipment after the game's release to enhance the multiplayer component.

Well, sounds cool, Anything else you wan PCM. readers to know about Amen, Tog? "Just this: Amen is a massix game, over two years in the making (so farl), and from the very beginning, the goal was to create the most fun single-player first, person a game ever created. The gameplay has always been, and always will be t, that which drives the cation of this game forward." Total Annihilation was a great game and all, but Amen is where Cavedog could really cement their rep.

-ED LEE says a little prayer for world peace every night. Then, his mom tucks him in.



Concept sketches like these allegedly cover an entire wall of Cavedog's offices. That, and color printouts from PCXL's Babe-o-Rama.



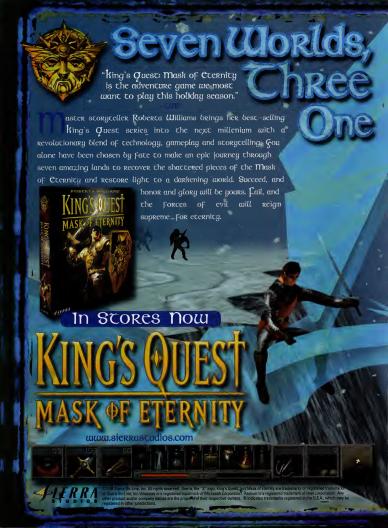
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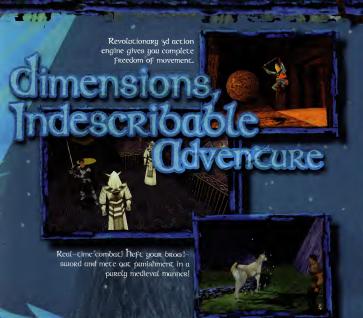


The tower you designed at Walkiki is the ultimate tourist magnet, \$3808-anight hotel sultes.Duty free shopping, Korean 880 restaurants, You're packing them in. Unforfunately, the same could be said for your only elevator. You better spend the dough to build more or the tourists will go to Miami and you'll be taking the express car to bankruptcy, www.youtpc.com

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### DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

HISTOGRAM ANG. SCORE . 6 2

PREVIOUSLY ON Tribes: Dynamix left us with an early version of the game, which we played the hell out of, A solid

engine, great outdoor worlds, and creative additions to the FPS genre were its major assets. Now we've gotten an updated build, and we felt there were enough changes to warrant a follow-up preview.

### Tribes

### Damn, now we gotta use our brains?

an, I was stoked about this game. When we first saw it, Dynamix's Tribes had a simplicity and solid playability that just screamed out to the hardcore gamer. Notable

elements were the jetpack, which gave you unheard of mobility for an FPS, and the super zoom-plus-laser rifle combo that provided a devastating attack style. Basically our multiplayer games consisted of making mad

rushes to the enemy base. stealing the flag, and booking out of there, while pulling off crazy midair sniper duels. Simple yet exhilarating, they rewarded the player with the most skill and aim (cough, me).

Now it's a couple of months later, and we've gotten an updated build. It didn't take long to find out that in the new Tribes world you can't play like that anymore. The laser rifle has been toned way down and also completely drains the energy bar with each shot. The new letpack physics make it harder to execute mile-long flying leaps. At least it's harder to crater, but that has taken away some of the thrill of making

those crazy jumps. So what happened? Simple. Many of the features were either partly implemented or nonexistent



Why kill your enemies when you can also make 'em squint?

in the early build, with the promise that they would be fully realized in the final version. And now they are. Fully functional vehicles are one of the additions. There's also a big new heap of strategy all over the game. You can see this in the new defensive structures that kick some major arse. Forget trying to go up against these things; they're nigh invulnerable unless the shield generator inside each base is destroyed. Smaller-scale games can turn into teams of humans ganging up on turrets instead of each other

In addition, you purchase all your gear - weapons, ammo, and even armor - through stations at your base. So now every time you die vou have to visit that old





Friendly fire is alleviated by little colored arrows...damn

### INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Dynamix
PUBLISHER → Sierra
RELEASE DATE → Q4 '98
3D SUPPORT → Direct 3D, Glide

INTEREST GAUGE

### THE HYPE

Supposed to help lead games into a new orld of team-based, large-scale play

### THE HURDLE

It went a little overboard with the strategy; it's now a bit too complicated.

It's extremely rewarding - if you can negotiate the learning curve, that is.

Having the enemy flag is like wearing a big "kill me" sign.

### FIVE QUESTIONS

DESIGNER SCOTT YOUNGBLOOD OF DYNAMIX FIELDS MORE QUESTIONS ON FOOD THAN ANY PREVIOUS INTERROGEE.

### Q. What's the origin of the word "Shazhot" and what does it mean?

A. I could tell you but then I would have to kill you. OK, OK - it's from that old sitcom "Mork and Mindy." Basically it's an alien word, from the planet Ork, for "shit." We couldn't really use "shit" "shazbot," Ya never know, it could take

in the game so we substituted off again, Wouldn't that be funny?

### Q. What's your favorite kind of cheese?

A. Limberger ... blech, I don't really like cheese, unless it's on pizza or a taco. IUh. excuse me?l

### Q. What is the sound of one hand clapping?

A. The same as the tree that fell in the woods that no one heard.

### Q. Olestra: Here to stay or just a passing fad?

A. Hmm ... well, if chicks start wrestling in it ... you get the idea.

### Q. You sure there aren't any plans for the rap song using Tribes voice commands?

A. I'll give you the samples, you make the song. Although if it becomes a huge hit and yer like really famous or something, don't forget the little people.



Getting beat down by turrets isn't good for your ego.

station again. To hear designer Scott Youngblood say it, the flexibility and strategy this offers is huge. "You can create a much more powerful team game. One guy could take the sensor lammer pack so all of his buddles that are close are invisible to enemy radar, while another takes the repair pack so he or she can heal everyone. The third might take a remote inventory station to allow for re-equipping of tribemates away from the base".

that were perfectly good in the first build have been inexplicably altered and made more complicated. The biggest example is the new voice command system. Before, issuing a voice communication such as a taunt ("Shazbot!") or team communication ("I have the enemy flag") was a matter of hitting an easily learned Shift-letter key combo. Now, even if you know

That's fine. But certain things

exactly what you want to say, you have to negotiate a cumbersome menu of commands to do it. The result is less team communication.

But after our griping and howls of protest, we actually attempted to get into it full bore. Slowly but surely, the new Tribes grew on us. It feels like a completely different game from the early build at times, but, leaving aside the next-to-useless laser guns, you can still achieve the old style of play with the right adjustments. The improved graphics have betterlooking textures, and the special effects have been upped a notch.

The addition of objectives beyond simple CTF also provides new gameplay elements, including maps with multiple towers or bunkers that teams must attempt to control by hitting a command spot in each. This turf-based style is reminiscent of King of the Hill.

### IMPROVEMENTS"

BUT THE PROBLEM IS-> It tastes like Ass Cola (aka Pepsi) RESULT—) Coke replaces it with Classic Coke (which was really just

JENNY McCARTHY'S MEANT TO REPLACE---BUT THE PROBLEM IS--->

THE NEW OGATH STAR MEANT TO REPLACE---> BUT THE PROBLEM IS---It's still blow-uppable
RESULT—6 Gets blown to shit

MEANT TO REPLACE ... > BUT THE PROBLEM IS--> It causes explosive dian RESULT--> Pretty gross

All these changes take the game closer to the developer's vision of how it should play, but the question is, is it more fun? The answer is, maybe. A lot of the changes imply that the game is best suited for a truly large-scale (up to 32 players) match, Luckily those of us without 31 friends on a T1 can will find that the foundation is solid and well-designed enough to stay fun for a smaller-scale game as well. OK, I must go now - my brain hurts.

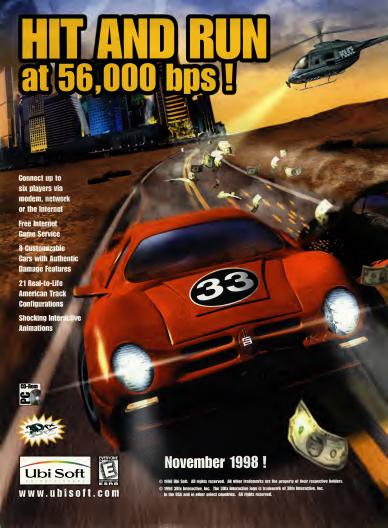
### - ED LEE says a mind is a terrible thing to use.







Not happy with the map? In multiplayer, anyone can vote to change the map to another of their choice, and if the in-game vote passes, the server will change it - nice









There are no tow trucks on the information highway.



\* Actual screenshots from the game

# Speed Busters

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DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



### X-Com Alliance

### Finally a chance to look at the Sectoids up close — then shoot them

n the beginning there was X-COM: UFO Defense, a turn-based tactical strategy game that pitted your secret organization, funded by the nations of the world, against the powerful Sectoid alien threat. It became a classic and spawned X-COM: Terror from the Deep in a similar turn-based vein. X-COM: Apocalypse, in what might have been a bit of developer Microprose's popular franchise bandwagonjumping, added a realtime alternative to the strategy and was followed by X-COM: Interceptor (reviewed PCXL 1), a disappointing space combat sim (with, of course, those infamous strategy elements still thrown in).

So purists, fear not. X-COM: Alliance may have leapt onto the Unreal engine bandwagon, but the strategy of researching weapons. managing resources (cash from the governments), and developing new skills within your teams will all remain. But a seemingly radical overhaul of the Unreal engine prompts the greatest interest.

Early screenshots of this game (due to ship in spring '99) show all the hallmarks of Unreal's graphical majesty. The environments - in space stations, underground complexes, and ships - vary in style and art composition, bringing the best out of the engine. The interface, however, really highlights the enhancements being worked in to the main Unreal code. Small but prominent monitors at the top of the screen give you the viewpoint

of your squad members. In poten-

tially yet another bandwagon

you can order around or control (should you be able to take over their bodies with the Psionic mind control skill). So the tactical combat of the

traditional strategy games just gets more up close and personal - the functions are the same, but this time you're not in some isometric bubble, detached from the action. "Ever since the release of X-COM: UFO Defense, fans have been asking to meet the X-COM aliens face to face. That's where the idea for a first-person game came from," commented producer John Broomhall.

maneuver. Alliance has you fight-

ing alongside squadmates whom

But to ensure that the qualities of the X-COM universe were not compromised, the Unreal engine supplied the ideal tools necessary to achieve the design goals.



### THE HYPE

X-COM is one of the most endearing PC gaming franchises. It will be marketed to death as a result.

### THE HURDLE

X-COM gamers are used to fighting the aliens in turn-based games; now they have to get into the first-person shooter

### THE HIT

Blending the fondly appreciated X-COM universe with the Unreal engine is an attractive combo





Creature targeting will let you set squad members on multiple enemies in coordinated attacks.

### **FIVE QUESTIONS**

MICROPROSE'S ALLIANCE PRO-DUCER, JOHN BROOMHALL, STOOD IN FRONT OF THE GAM-ING INQUISITION REFERRED TO IN HUSHED TONES AS THE FIVE QUESTIONS

### Q: What was your favorite part or design element of Unreol?

A: Graphically it rocked. The immersive environments and lighting effects were awesome.

### Q: How Is the X-COM franchise standing up to the new challenges in game development: the move toward more action, 3D acceleration, multiplayer, etc.?

A: The X-COM universe and history is on the map and here to stay. New gaming genres are cool, as they enable us to explore new parts of this rich and detailed heritage and look at it in new and exciting ways.

### Q: Played much Rainbow Six or Delto Force? These squad games are getting popular, aren't they? Why is that? A: Yeah. I guess people enjoy relating to and controlling other characters in the game. in X-COM: Alliance this works to great effect via an excellent control interface we're working on.

Q: Since you're working on an alien involved game, you're obviously an expert on alien civilizations: Are there real aliens, and are they Grays? A: Of course. Don't you read the news papers?

Q: it's a fight, the two elder statesmen of PC gaming franchises go headto-head - X-COM: Allionce and X-Wing: Allionce - who's gonna win? A: Different brands, different games ...



This would be a good time to use that fire button.

"[The Unreol engine's] extensibility and code flexibility has allowed us to create some unique features - for example, multiple viewpoints, a 2D map, and trooper way-pointing," explained Broomhall.

Staying true to the fundamentals of X-COM lore, the research, arming of troopers, psi-skills, hospitalization, and even the UFOpe-



control your squads. A human alliance with a third alien race provides plenty of opportunity for shared technology research and strategy. Once you are in the firstperson mode, strategy and tactics still play a vital role as your senses are bombarded with the detailed graphics and powerful ambient music and audio. Also, you can look at a 2D map over the action from the viewpoint of each of your squadmates (you can take up to three squad members with you on

With the enhancements that Microprose's U.K. development studio is making to the Unreol

dia all remain prominent as you

### engine, Allionce looks way ahead of the disappointing Klingon Honor Guard in both concept and design. While the multiplayer issues of the Unreal engine need to be addressed to allow the squadbased combat potential to flourish, there's still plenty of time for both Epic and Microprose to get it right. The flavor of the X-COM universe matched with the detail of the Unreal engine is a combination full

of potential; let's just hope that this potential gets fulfilled. - ROB SMITH's mind is a complete blonk right now.





WNEALL --- Th

















(Far Left) All those familiar research and team selection screens aren't being dumped as the X-COM franchise enters the Unreal age. (Right) Little Gray, so far from home, about to be so horribly dead.





Dear Mrs. Johnson, It is with my deepest sympathy that I write this letter to inform you that your son, Joe, was mostly melted yes erday in a skirmish with a unit of Tan soldiers.

What is left of Joe I've enclosed in this little baggie. I thought you might like to keep it. If anything else turns up, we will

You should be proud to know that Joe fought forward it immediately. bravely till the very end. As a keepsake, I've

attached a photo of Joe in action. Most people think it's some kind of game out here. For us, every day is a battle for survival.

Joe understands that now.

With you in your time of sorrow.









### DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

After working at Shiny Entertainment and helping to create the hugely popular Earthworm Ilm franchise and the critical hit MDK, Nick Bruty and pals set out on their own. Both EJ and MDK highlighted a particular blend of humor with some excellent technology that the developers plan on taking in their own direction with their first project Glants

### Giants: Citizen Kabuto

A long time ago, in a land far away ... some really freaky stuff went down

lose your eyes for a second and remember the stories you heard when you were just a kid: tales of far-off worlds. fantastic creatures, beautiful princesses, and brave adventurers. It's a nice memory, isn't it? Now imagine those stories told by a

slightly mad English bloke and you have a pretty good idea of the concent behind Giants: Citizen Kabuto. The far-off worlds have been

replaced by islands that are little more than lush battlefields, the fantastic creatures with surly 100foot giants, the beautiful princesses with half-naked sorcer-

esses, and the brave adventures with a crack unit of Cockney snacemen. It's a fairy tale turned sideways, the kind that would send you scrambling under the covers when you were a kid and that makes you sit up and take notice today

Not surprisingly, the guys at Planet Moon Studios come off as slightly mad English blokes when they describe this game. They start by telling you about the main characters: There's Kabuto (pronounced big-fri-gén-dyüd), the Sea Reaper (pronounced täp-leshä-tee), and the Meccaryns (pronounced spas-'men-kwor-'tef).

Kabuto is a massive giant who uses brute strength to combat his foes. A simple being who only wants to be free, this creature will use the very battlefield he

> fights on as a weapon



planting traps in his enemy's path and digging into the ground with his hands to create a giant mud projectile. The Sea Reaper fights best on the sea (go figure), maneuvering around the island in her magic boat, stealing supplies, and casting magic spells, one of which creates a mind-boggling tornado.

The Meccaryns gain their strength from teamwork. When

### INFO BOX

PUBLISHER → Interplay
RELEASE DATE → Q2 '99
aD SUPPORT → Glide, Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

incredible graphics, innovative design and a great developer track record add up to one potential-packed game

### THE HURDLE

Can six guys in a small apartment studio compete with today's big-budget develcoment houses?

### THE HIT

Simple but deep warfare among three unique races with a healthy smattering of truly offbeat humor



Okay, so we already understand that this is not your typical game design, but frankly some of the characters in Giants are downright weird to the tenth degree.



The Meccaryns work as a team to destroy enemies and pick up chicks in seedy English pubs.





Not only do the characters look awsome, but they also make the action more dramatic with expressions.







It's absolutely frightening when you find out exactly how low you are on the food chain.

the conflict among these three enemies. Each is trying to take total control of one of the game's 40 mystical islands by dominating the world's resources. So that means digging for oil, mining minerals, and chopping down trees. right? Wrong, The Planet Moon fairy-tale world is different from what you might expect.

The "resources" are simple, sheeplike creatures and hedonistic island natives called Smarties (pronounced big-hed-pär-tee-giz). These little fellas are the key to the entire game. All they want to do is

for you. If you're smart, you'll make their life better by building them a pub, because the harder they party, the harder they work.

Usually the single-player and multiplayer conflicts come down to who controls these frat-boy natives. and the battles are quite spectacular. The developers have focused their efforts on squeezing the most out of 3D hardware to make the special effects worthy of the word special. Judging by the creature powers they are working on right now, they're on the right track. Here are just three:



### FIVE QUESTIONS

VARIOUS PLANET MOON MEMBERS CON-TRIBUTED CONCISE ANSWERS TO THE **EVER-INSIGHTFUL FIVE QUESTIONS.** 

### Q: What Is the single best part about being a small developer?

A: Bob Stevenson: Being able to get all six of us around a table in the pub and still be able to genuinely declare it a company meeting.

### Q: You all share the same small offices; do you ever get a little stir crazy?

A: Bob Stevenson: We're pretty used to the whole team being within earshot of each other. It was the same when doing MDK. If we want peace and quiet, we just blast music through our headphones until our ears bleed.

### Q: Who exactly is Citizen Kabuto? A: Tim Williams: The huge glant in the game, Duh.

Q: Your offices are located in the sleepy town of Sausalito. Do you ever have troubles with retirees stealing your hubcaps or perpetrating other acts of vandalism?

A: Tim Williams: Not really because when they start doing that we cave their effin' heads in! And it's never that sleepy here since we actually live above an erotic massage parlor.

### Q: You have a half-naked character in your game. Exactly how many hours were spent in motion capture?

A: Bob Stevenson; Well, we've certainly taken a lot of time to simply look at half-naked women, if that's what you mean - it's important to get it right.



Smarties love pubs - the more they drink, the harder they work.

The shadow attack: This Sea Reaper spell makes the shadows of your enemies rise up from the ground, take 3D form, and attack their former hosts

The tidal wave: Another spell in the Sea Reaper's arsenal, this weapon sends a huge wave over the battlefield, sweeping away everything in its path. The decoy busker: Created by

those wild and crazy Smarties, the decoy busker [Rob what the heck is a busker? It's okay when Brits use words like whilst and colour, but busker? I went to college, I consider myself well read, I have even watched several hours of British sitcoms on Comedy Central and my local PBS station, but never once have I heard the word busker. This is just wrong. The developers live in Sausalito, they should speak as the Sausalitans speak.] annoys whatever is chasing you so much that

your pursuer quits what it is doing and tries to wipe the accordionplaying street performer (the aforementioned busker) off the face of the earth. While the enemy should certainly be applauded for its actions, it will waste valuable time during its busker slaughter.

And although these powers are weird, be assured that there will be more like them. After all, these are the guys who made "The World's Most Interesting Bomb" for MDK. Nothing in this game is guite what you'd expect, and, frankly, we can't wait to see what this group thinks of next. Because right now this is our kind of fairy tale, and we just know it's going to end weirdly ever after.

 DAN EGGER often hides under his covers after hearing scary stories or watching WB sitcoms

### **REAL GIANTS**

GGEST ACHIEVE WEAKNESS --- Hull

MY GIANT

BIGGEST ACHIEVE MENT-> Put the

movie career WEAKNESS--->

/EAKNESS---}











THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS COLLECTIVE GGEST ACHIEVE EAKNESS...









The graphics in Giants give you an amazing sense of scale, Because some of the characters are more than ten times larger than the others, you often get to see the ridiculous size differences between them, adding considerably to the game's 'wow' factor.

### DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



med by industry veteran and Wing Commander creator Chris Roberts, Digital Arvil has already got a significant name. Signed to a big contract with Microsoft, DA's other talent includes Erin Roberts and El Mariachi director and Quentin Tarantino pal Robert Rodriguez.

### Conquest: Frontier Wars

Big name developers, big money, and big expectations

et's face it, Digital Anvil and Microsoft have the perfect business relationship. On one hand, Microsoft is determined to prove to the gaming community they can publish a number of high-quality titles, while Digital Anvil (DA) needed to find some "patient money" to start developing new gaming content. The quality of this content is TBD. While brothers Chris Roberts (also director of the Wing Commander movie) and Erin Roberts do indeed have another space combat simulation in the works for late1999, the first DA game to be published by Microsoft will be

a realtime strategy game, dubbed

Conquest: Frontier Wars, And what a freakin' cool RTS it's shaping up to be.

In the near future, humans are competing for galactic domination against the insect-like Mantis race. To successfully colonize and conquer, players assume command of one race and must harvest resources from planets. develop new technologies, and most importantly, find out the best tactical way to blow enemy fleets into smithereens. Each of the two races (four in multiplayer, including the Solarians and Vyriums) has its own attributes, with assorted strengths and weaknesses. For example, humans are very balanced in all areas, but the Mantis are relentless aggressors with the ability to attack from long distances. In total, there are 16 star systems to command but don't worry about controlling all the combat at once - fleet admirals will automatically respond to threats and carry out orders light vears away. When you want to get behind the action in another system, simply access a jump gate and fly through the portal to reach your destination.

Graphically, the game is stunning, with 3D polygonal units, beautiful backdrops of planets





### THE HYPE Everyone wants to see if Roberts & co.

are canable of creating more than just

### THE HURDLE

If released first, the similar-looking Homeworld may steal quite a bit of thurn der from DA's first title

### THE HIT

Conquest looks to be a balanced blend of strategy and action, with an easy-to-use interface, to boot

As with Homeworld there is a major effort to make space look interesting. Seems to be working.

Do-founder Tony Zurovec conceived and created Crusader: No Remorse PC ACCELERATOR January 1999

#### **FIVE QUESTIONS**

ERIN ROBERTS, PRODUCER AND DIREC-TOR OF CONCUEST: FRONTIFR WARS TALKS WITH POXL AROUT THE GAME, THE RTS GENRE, AND AMERICANA

Q: What's the inspiration for Conquest: Frontier Wars? A: We're all huge RTS fans, here. We wanted to create one in space since we

also love enic sci-fi hattles

Q: How will Conquest be different than what's out there today? A: We're pushing the genre forward. with 3D polygonal graphics, a lot of unique ships, and 16 systems to explore. We also feel the AI is lacking in most of the RTS games today. Conquest will be

#### Q: A lot of people may say Conquest looks a lot like Relic/Sierra Studios' upcoming game, Homeworld, What do you have to say about that? A: Well, though it may look similar to

polished and very Immersive.

Homeworld, since they're both 3D RTS games in space, the story and interface is quite different. We thought of having a full X, Y, and Z- degree game, but we felt it would compromise the player's control, in our opinion, a game's interface is the most important thing, so while I'm looking forward to seeing Homeworld, I'm not sure how easy it will be to play. There's room enough for both of us

#### Q: What are the coolest units in the game?

A: The Carriers are, because they can launch attacks across systems and with the small group of fighters that help out, it brings me back to the epic WWII battles, such as the "Battle of Midway."

Q: Having worked off-and-on in the U.S. for a number of years now, is there anything you just don't "get"

with us Yankees?



This picture looks a bit like clip art floating in space - not good.

and nebulae, and texturemapped particle explosions. It has vet to be determined if the game will require a 3D accelerator card and what chipsets will be supported as a recommended option. Coupled with a majestic orchestral soundtrack (over sixty minutes of original music), it seems the folks at DA will succeed in their ultimate goal - to recreate a white-knuckled epic WWII-like experience.

Conquest: Frontier Wors supports up to eight players over a LAN and four players over the Internet, via the MSN Gaming Zone. There will be the standard fare of head-to-head and co-op games, such as DeathMatch and Capture The Flag varieties, but all maps will be randomly generated so no player has an advantage over others. Instead of the dozens of units found in other RTS games, such as Total Annihilation, Conquest: Frontier Wors relies on a smaller, more carefully balanced units, as with Storcroft. In short, gamers who dig the

futuristic, sci-fi battles of the Wina Commonder series will no doubt enjoy playing another Roberts' space combat game but from a different perspective and a tactical twist.

- After seeing the 10,000 sg. ft monsion, MARC SALTZMAN instantly realized he's on the wrong side of the goming biz.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS**

















Some shining cut scenes will accompany these, err, 3D particle explosions. And we're certain that the game will include things like colored lighting and other such graphical effects they usually do.

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# YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO NEXT (BUT, THEN AGAIN, NEITHER DO WE)

#### DAILY POLLS

## YESTERDAY'S

Yote!

Mary Only Vote Once

WITH A HEAVY DOSE OF SARCASM

#### DAILY NEWS

#### THE WAY WE SEE I

Pool Game To Include "Actual Pool

ink they're on to something here" >>:

#### DAILY FRAG



Today's Daily Frag: GIRLY MEN

AND THE ALL-NEW

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DEMOS		SELECT A GENR	
ACREV	GNUKE	FFG	
ADVENTURE	PLATFORM	SIMULATION	
HARDWARE	RACING	STRATEGY	
HARDWARE	POACHE	SEARCH	

BABE-O-RAMA

Name: Sarah Michelle Geller Birthdete: Andl 14, 1977 Hometown: New York City

RATING

PCXL.IGN.COM WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE?



# The box for Apollo 18 weighs about 2 pounds more than Calista Flockhear

# Finally

Every year we go through the same laborious process of waiting for the big games to come in. Once again all of the titles that didn't slip until next year have made it out just in time for the holidays. So what do you buy? Look no further than the following pages for the most honest, in-depth, and slightly off-kilter reviews you'll



ever find. Blood 2, Sin, Grim Fandango, and Fallaut 2 all lived up to the early hype, while Tresposser, Space Bunnies Must Die, and Test Drive Off Raad 2 had to face the wrath of an angry PCXL reviewer. Got a problem with our scores? Don't agree? Simply respond to politely to umustbehigh@pcxt.com and we'll tikely ignore you.

	Since we focus our cover-
7	age on fast-paced games,
~	we don't get a chance to
ΰ	review every PC game that
ŭ	comes out. But in just a few
	words, we can tell you
Е	everything you need to
Н	know about the games we
2	didn't review and cut out all
U	the crap.

GAME	INSIGHT
REDJACK: REVENGE	RATHER WATCH
OF THE BRETHREN	REVENGE OF NERDS
CARFLLA'S RIG GAME	SHOOT THE FMV
HUNTER II	ANIMALS, AGAIN
APOLLO 18	HEAVY+DEEP=SLEEF
REAH: FACE THE	YEP, IT'S UNKNOWN
UNKNOWN	ALRIGHT

#### WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Flawless, Perfect, Better than that sex dream with Neve Campbell and Denise Richards

A true classic. An excellent game that is well worth the money

A great game, but may feature a few minor flaws that are easily overtooked A good, solid game that lacks the inspiration

or vision of a truly great game A game that rises above the average due to a hook in style or gameplay

The definition of mediocrity, this game doesn't

commit any major crime other than being ordinary A game that doesn't exactly suck, but probably won't hold your interest for long

OK, maybe there's an element of redeeming value in this game, but it still sucks

> Very little of interest, this game is deeply flawed and should be avoided

Utter crap -- Complete shit - A barrel of bullocks - In other words it sucks really, really bad

#### KILLER GAME

you see the PC ACCFI FRATOR Killer Game Only the true classics deserve this elite sta

#### SUTCIDE



#### CRITICAL ADD-ONS>>

'Il stick a corresponding logo on the review. We include only those devices that make the game better; just being compatible isn't good enough. If you don't see the logo, then that particular add-on doesn't do much for the same.

3D SOUND

















# ACCELE-RATED>>

information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: how it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card.

# ACCELE-RATED



RATINGS>> Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 - no al points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games: they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards - our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in we won't hold back and won't allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

## GRAPHICS

endering quality, framerates, and necial effects all contribute to an ersive gaming experience.

#### SOUND Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH How often you find yourself playing a game, and how long, are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN The backbone of a game is the overall vision behind it, from characters and



#### I'm through with your punk-ass bitch!

#### ACCELE-RATED

Like Quake II, Sin is OpenGL-compatible only, Right now Yoodoo 27-OpenGL drivers leave a lot to be desired, which could make TNT the better choice one on one, but nothing beats an SLL Any accelerator with an OpenGL driver adds greatly to the game's graphics. Definitely a showpiece for any decent piece of hardware.

MATROX 6 200

V00D00 5

VOODOO 2 SUI

API SUPPORT: Open GL

eah, that pretty much sums up the prevailing attitude of *Sin* and its dreadlocked hero, Colone

locked hero, Colonel John Blade. Pil pretty much lay I all down for ya at the beginning and then go into painstaking, exrudating detail. The single-player experience is good but not great. The level designs in tomostisent, but mostly good. The weapons are good but not great. Multiplayer rocks, Face It, there's no chance that POU. Is not goom allike this game. Breastly villain, big guns, evil name, and plenty of attitude— is with

what we like.

Now for the nitty-gritty. It's kinda like *Duke Nuken* running under the *Quake II* engine; *Quake II*, but with real-world settings, better graphics (16-bit textures), and a big heap of attitude. The action one-liners and the steady banter between Biade and his off-camera sidektic, IC, am to give movie atmosphere, and to some degree it succeeds. Augmenting this feel is a slew of locations that are action movie estaples, such as a dam, and lift, a chemical lab.

city street, and a bank. These envi-

ronments are full of interactive ele-

ments that frequently drive the

plot forward — there are lots of working computer terminals, for example, into which you can type cryptic DOS commands. The levels progress in a well-

paced series of events in the single-player game, but their quality varies wildly. The early levels that most of v'all have seen in the demo are good, with immersive environments and creative layouts: however, the midgame levels take a turn for the worse, with more run-of-the-mill settings and a lack of interesting layouts and locations, Thankfully, the game finishes very strongly with a third act made up of a few great levels, including a jungle sequence and a mansion scenario that end in the inevitable boss showdown, And unlike the bosses in some other recent games out there, this one kicks some serious ass. It's not the main villain - oh, did I not







Not all enemies are created equal. While many of them are much scarier than Elexis, none of them have the jiggle-factor of the evil yillainess. The Al isn't so hot in the characters but the pure variety is better than most games of this kind.







The total body count in Sin makes Rambo movies look like an after school special. The most satisfying kill of all is definitely the head shot with the sniper rifle (the best sniper rifle yet as well).

mention her yet? She's Elexis Sinclaire, who turns out to be a decently designed character, along with her more obvious assets.

You battle through these visceral, eve-candified levels with a well-balanced arsenal of 10 weapons, all pretty much standard FPS stuff, but with a few twists and plenty of polish. Besides the standard pistol, shotgun, machine gun, and rocket launcher, you've got your spider mines, plasma gun, and chargeable energy gun, which can lay down some heavy firepower. Then there's the sniper rifle, the new must-have in FPS weapon design. Sin's is possibly the coolest sniper rifle we've ever seen. (For plenty more on Sin's weapons check this month's strategy.) Overall, this bunch of guns lacks new ideas but is solid nonetheless.

Which brings us to multiplayer in a seamless segue. Sin's DM has a great combination of solid performance, balanced weapons, and interesting levels. It has the Quoke if multiplayer code, which is a huge head start right there. By all reports, games are stable over the internet at even 2-88.bbps. With support in the new version of GameSpy you'll be fragging to your hearts content. And the 10 multiplayer levels have some real standouts — Behind Zee Bookcase has to be one of the best high-concept levels we've ever seen. As in Quoke II, you can also

The game isn't without its problems. Extremely long load times (about 10 times those of Quoke II or Unreo), especially for players without the 600MB full install, grate on the nerves and make dying (which you will do, believe me) an even less pleasant experience. Also, the save

frag on all the single-player levels.

games are ludicrously large mine ballooned to upward of 17MB a savel

Another thing: The Al sucks ass. Enemiles behave erratically, to say the least; you'll see them running in clircles, sitting around while you stroil along, and just being general dumb-asses. This hurts the suspension of disbeller, especially since the setting is 'real-world' environments. There are also some level-transition bugs. For all list attempted cool, Jim manages to be about as cool as your dad talking in you'll prine, Lame.

The rest of Sin was given that once over with a can of Pledge to make everything bright and polished. It's a shame the Al and the technical Issues will keep it just this side of a Killer Game award.

ED LEE is like school in summertime — no closs.

#### **GRAPHICS**

Quake II with 16-bit textures, and

SOUND

Good sound effects, annoying dia logue, and just-average music.

DEPTH

Single-player is long enough, and multiplayer will keep you playing.

will keep you playing.

Who's fatter: Marion Brando, Chris Farley, John Goodman, Puff Daddy, or Alicia Silverstone:

#### DESIGN

Quality of levels are inconsistent, and the action movie/Duke Nukem attitude is forced.

RATING 🚍

# RAIING

Pluses

→ Great multiplayer
 → Polished presentation
 → Flexis Sinclaire

Minuses

Minuses

→ Bad Al
→ "Attitude" ain't workin
→ Long-ass load times, fairly buggy

#### SINNERS



GLUTTONY—): Chins Farley
GREED—): Leonardo DiCapprio
WRATH—): Phil Harmans is wife or Ol
LUST—): Pres-Wee Herman
ENVY—): Lucy Lawless
SLOTH—): Airnion Brando
PRIDE—): Prestly much everybody



#### My secret life as an atomic playboy

#### ACCELE-RATED

ver good the game might be, Voodoo 2 SLI mode. A fine example of technology not being the main focus, Follout 2 gives the storyline and in-depth gameplay top billing, with lens flare and bilinear mip-bump-map-stuffing not getting a

#### DISASTROUS

After playing Follout 2, we started to

THE CHEVY CHASE SHOW VICTIMS -- Chevy Chase and any who activally watched the show actor has been reduced to starring in awful movies like Cops and Roberson and Man of the House

1998 INTERPLAY THIRD-QUARTER LOSSES VICTIMS -- More than 50 en so far, several divisions, and FALLOUT-v-> Fallaut 2 and Carmaged

don 2 now desperately need to se From what we've seen, this may THE NIPPLE INCIDENT

VICTIMS -> Poor impressionable PCX readers who had to look at --FALLOUY---> Angry inbred mothers everywhere expressed concern tha verywhere expressed concern that their 28-year old sons couldn't handle the sight of female nipples. PCXL officially desided that the nipples in question were in fact nipples.

The post-apocalyptic future sure does look bright: The raw and gritty Follout 2 is here to remind the gaming world what a real RPG is. An oldschool RPGer like me could just about kiss someone at Interplay This is the real deal for true role players, the hard stuff.

For those who are under the impression that role-playing games consist of goofy-ass-looking characters with big heads, bad dialogue, and enough mental anguish to make a therapist run for the razor blades, a game like Follout may seem outright alien. Here, you make a character from scratch, with a complete and userfriendly creation system that includes onscreen explanations for every stat, skill, and option. After that, you find your main purpose: to retrieve the Garden of Eden Construction Kit to prevent your desert village from dving.

Your elders send you out into the nuclear wasteland, sporting a sassy Vault 13 bodysuit, a spear, and any loot you can scrounge from the area. Then events get complicated, but the control never does. Follout 2. much like the original, gives you the overall framework to achieve your goal but lets you follow the course as you see fit. This is a

world ripe for the picking, with plenty of opportunity for profit, item collection, and experience.

Follout 2 has added animated textures, more denth in some scenes, and better lighting to the sharp, well-defined but non-3D graphics. You can't rotate the map, however, and the game has a transparency field around your characters, which makes them visible behind walls but often blocks out items. The atmospheric sound effects work well, though, and so does the musical score.

As in the original, you can find nonplayer characters, but this time around they don't act like complete idiots - a big plus - and will generally use decent combat tactics. Other improvements include no overall time limit and the option to keep adventuring after you complete the main goal, uncovering features you may have missed. The critical hits option, which lets you aim for a specific body part on an opponent, is awesome. Combat is tactical and turn-based (gulp), but the rest of the game is played in real time. And during combat you control only your character, not the NPCs who may follow you around.

The game lets you lead your character down the path of heroic righteousness, but you're more likely to take the evil route of



The landscape is littered with the remains of an ancient war.

killing, stealing, and taking advantage of every whore and wasteland sucker you come across. A karma and reputation system keeps track of your progress and directly affects how others relate to you.

In the end, there are only minor imperfections in Follout 2. This is a truly great role-playing game, a rare and beautiful thing.

- Confessing to being on RPGer won't get JASON D'APRILE chicks.

#### GRAPHICS They aren't 3D, but they're sharp and keen-looking.

#### SOUND

Mainly ambient effects, but there are decent tunes and nice combat noises

#### DEPTH

A veritable pit of playability. There are side quests everywhere and plenty of opportunities to be naughty or nice.

#### DESIGN

Exceptional role-playing design, with virtually everything you could want from a wasteland adventure.







on moral choices

#### Minuses



→ Great interface and presentation









Choose a critical hit point and do mondo damage.



There's always a joint to case in Fallout 2, but whether it's worth your time is another question entirely.

# THE ROYAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

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# Trespasser

How to screw up a perfectly good game idea

#### ACCELE-RATED

Supplisingly, the software version of Trespasser runs just about as well as it does on a long to the supplied of the software runs just about as well as it of the supplied of the setup for this just as a fast CPU (and we mean peally fast) and AGP graphics card. The trag or TNT fared right on par with SLI'd Voodoo 2s; with any card, the effects are uninspiring. There in mip mapping, and clipping problems are unwoldable.

1740

VOODOO 2 SLI
VOODOO 2 SLI
2 3
RIVA TINT

API SUPPORT: Direct3D

he following is my journal as I delved into Tresposser. It is presented verbatim so you can share my pain from promising start to painful, uninspired finish.

#### 

When Tresposser arrived from our slightly drugged-out mailroom guy, everyone gathered around my computer like bums to a bottle of whiskey. We'd got excited by the inside looks and the screenshots drummed out by DreamWorks. Now it was time to come clean with the release. So begins my tale.

The John Williams music gave us that "oh shit, this is going to be cool" feel, and the voice of Lord Attenborough soothed us into the world of Tres passer.

When I went to the options screen to set up my Quake-standard WASD control settings, I had to assign a button to trum my wrist (thought to myself: "Self, with the hell would I need to turn my wrist? Of nool, maybe I can pimp-slap dinosaurs or something."). Then I headed off to the video options to set up a 1,024 x — Wal ad amm minute I My brand-new dul a SLI'd Yoodoo 2s should be able to go liker than 80 ox 60o. Wrong.

#### 

I start walking through the lush undulating jungles of - wait another damn minute. Jungles aren't supposed to undulate, and trees shouldn't float in midair, and the game shouldn't run at less than 20fps on a PII 333 with a TNT and dual Voodoo 2s. I was just going to start bitching about the graphics when I found my health meter on my left breast - wait a damn minute. I've got tits. woohoo! I spent the next 30 minutes running around the compound staring at my chest. Then I started to play with the "innovative" new control system. In a word, it sucks ass (OK, three words - sue me). Everything natural and right in game control was replaced with senseless, stupid tasks like turning your wrist.

ural and right in game control was replaced with senseless, stupid tasks like turning your wrist. Stumbling around the training grounds like a stoned, drunk, motor-skill-riablenged freak — I'm sure having fun now. Minnie Driver delivers a subtie performance as the voice of the main character Anne, who spends the entite game looking for a phone





Perhaps the only place in the world where a chest like this won't help you is in Jurassic Park. Dinosaurs don't seem to care what they eat. Good thing the prehistoric beasts are easy to kill or this game might have managed some sort of "fun".



ser are her asts, so in cas Stoven Spielburg makes a movie d on the gar have a few sug

WHO-> Thelma &







WHO--- jake & Etro WHAT---- The fat, hest of Blues WHY-> He'd likely

WHO---- Cheech 8 WHAT-> Copious hetter.

#### ---} GUNS AND DINOSAURS AT LAST Eventually got over the control

issues and really began my journey. The true promise of Trespasser was apparent when I turned a corner to see two brontosaurs gracefully shaking the very ground I was walking on. The animations and smooth skin of the dinosaurs were so detailed that I was willing to forgive the graphic glitches. poor frame rate, and inane controls. After fruitless attempts to slay the peaceful creatures, I moved on to my first showdown with a living, breathing dinosaur looking to make me his lunch. One swing of the baseball bat to the head and the raptor was lving on the ground spewing blood.

The real-world physics model allowed me to do useless but fun things like turning the body over. and the puzzle elements, box stacking, board laving, and environment manipulating all sounded good in theory. But let's face it; Stacking boxes in real life is a pain in the ass. When they keep falling over, as the "real" physics and annoying controls insist that they do, it's frustrating at the very least. Sometimes realism isn't the best option.

I also learned that hitting targets more than a foot away was useless, didn't matter which "realistic" weapon I tried. And after I learned the predictable attack patterns of the raptors and T-

ferocious prehistoric carnivores; instead I died from things like falling off a log. Ridiculous. --- WHERE DID I PUT THAT KEY CARD?

Perhaps the most tragic element in Trespasser is that, despite the "innovation," at the core it is still Wolfenstein without any of the action. Once again you have to find key cards to get to the next part of a level. That means you kill all the dinosaurs, which is mildly fun at best, then wander around the level looking for a stupid yellow card. If the physics are so real, shouldn't a gun do the trick on the door? And why would the security still work if the power and telephones are down? Oh wait, there's more, You can only carry two items at one time. So if you want to carry a computer disk and a key card, you have to run around unarmed, stuttering through the jumpy frame rate. Worse, you must hold one of the objects in your hand, so every time you try to go through a door, the

#### object falls. Frustrating. --- THE FINAL JOURNEY The more I explored, the more I

just got frustrated with the poor game design. It's easy to tag the new physics model and great skeletal animation system as "revolutionary," but in my opinion Trespasser is a step back in nearly

- MIKE SALMON is quite happy there won't be multiplayer

every imaginable way.

#### GRAPHICS

Still screenshots look incredible — don't be fooled.

# SOUND

Music and voices are professional and enic but sparse at times

#### DEPTH Same dinosaurs need killing through-out the game. Could use more variety.

DESIGN

#### A for concept, D for disastrous





→ Shooting dinosaurs
→ You've got breasts
→ Lovely dinosaur animations

#### Minuses



etting really old Frustrating as hell!

#### OEVELOPER --- LucasArts PUBLISHER --- LucasArts REQUIRED --> P133, 32MB RAM, 4X CO-ROM, 2MB PCI video card, 16-bit sound card, 64MB hard drive space IDEAL --- P166, 4MB 3O accelerator or AGP 3D card

# Grim Fandango

#### Style is a dead man

#### ACCELE-RATED

Grim only uses 3D acceleration to smooth out the look of the characters and objects, since the land-scapes are all prerendered. It looks pretty good in software, but those smoother textures on Manny and the other characters will at least put your 3D accelera-tor to good use. Which is a nice change for adventure games.

VOODOO 2

V00D001 MATROX G200

RIVA TNT

#### HELL-BENT

API SUPPORT: Direct3D

but since most of us won't quite make that one, let's take a look at some of

#### THE NUMBER 666

... with a layover in Newark. Seating starts in the front and works back depending on just how foul you were

#### THE ELECTRIC SHOCK

Also useful here in the land of the liv ing depending on your personal tastes, for the ultimate in damned if you do and even if you don't. To keep you moving on your way, it gives off a massive shock when it's not in motion and another every time it hits the ground. There's a girl I used to know

#### TH€ '73 PINTO

wheels now, baby. Comes complete with rust holes in the floor panel and . "My other car's a Porsche" bumper

ack in the '40s, a cinema directorial form arose that was called "film noir" (the French term for

"black cinema") because of its dark, gritty look at society and human nature. Hard-boiled detectives, femmes fatales, double crosses, and morally ambiguous heroes were its trademarks, and in games it's almost never done right anymore (did anyone play Black Dahlia?). So things looked promising when LucasArts announced that Tim Schafer, designer of Full Throttle and Day of the Tentacle. was taking a humorous stab at the darker side of games.

The result, Grim Fandango, is an instant classic. Mixing Mexico's Day of the Dead lore with Mayan and Aztec mythos, then wrapping it all around a darkly comedic noir storyline, Grim is truly original. Sure, it's still a graphic puzzle game - the plot moves along as you progress through item-manipulation-based obstacles - but no one is going to mistake it for a Myst-style game, thank god. There aren't stoic, lifeless environments in this underworld, and while all the characters may be dead, they make the landscane seem alive Take the role of travel agent

Manny Calavera, who is working in this bizarre land selling travel policies to the recently deceased. While trying to nab himself a grade-A client - a mystery woman named Mercedes Colomar - he gets caught up in a web of deceit, intrigue, and deception. The plot revolves around Manny's quest to



The Land of the Dead doesn't make a soul feel at home.



Honest boss, it was this smarmy guy standing next to me. Uh huh. Uh huh.

find this woman after she mistakenly runs away into the wilds of the Land of the Dead because, he thinks, of something he said.

Moving from one distinctive, incredible-looking 3D landscape to the next, Grim Fandango weaves its macabre tale through mind-bending puzzles, fantastic cinematic sequences, and a plethora of wonderful characters. Another marvel of the game is the mouseless interface. You use a gamepad or the keyboard to control Manny, and though it's odd at first, it's soon second nature - Manny's head turns to look at anything interactive or interesting, and you just press a button to act on his glance.

The music is also great - a mix of stylish '40s jazz and bebop, all evocative and perfect for the setting. The voice acting is just as good, and superb sound effects round things out. There are only a few negatives here. Some graphic stuttering occurs, shadows are blocky, and control isn't as sensitive as it could be. Also, like most LucasArts' adventures, many of the puzzle solutions are hard to fathom, although Grim has a stronger sense of logic in it than does the last Monkey Island.

Seldom do style and substance come together at all in this industry, much less with so much success. Grim Fandango is a milestone for the graphic adventure, pushing the genre as far as possible without reinventing it. The game never

parodies its subject matter, but instead pays intelligent and humorous homage to both South American imagery and film noir. It's one of the coolest experiences to cross the PC in a long time.

- IASON D'APRILE is a lat like Manny, except he's nat quite dead and he isn't a babe magnet.

#### GRAPHICS

Superb mix of polygonal characters and beautiful prerendered scenery.

# SOUND

Fantastic music, excellent voice acting, and top-notch effects.

#### DEPTH

A great story, clever puzzles, and appealing characters.

#### DESIGN

Intuitive and distinctive control coupled with a near perfect blend of puzzles,

plot, dialogue, and scenery.





 Superb landscapes and characters
 Actually funny when it tries to be -> Great control system and puzzles

## Minuses

Some puzzle solutions are vague -> Little replay value after you win -> Some graphic and control stuttering

# Don't Let The Thief Sneak Up On You!

Enter to WIN
Thief Merchandise
TODAY!

THE DARK PROJECT

www.eidosinteractive.com

#### 5 GRAND PRIZES

- 3DFX VOODOO II 3D accelerator
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- Official Strategy Guide by Prima Publishing
- · Thief: The Dark Project T-shirt
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   Interest Assurance Project T-shirt













Whenever the determinant Neural Let 1999. No purchase receives 200 protects with your main and address to Their The Data Properties Accessed contents (65 flavours Steep, See Francisco), and will not be provided by the Content of th

#### ACCELE-RATED

While a 3D accelerator card isn't actually required, the system requirements take a hit running in the depleted software mode. With acceleration the explosions have a suitably rounded, full feel but there aren't polys to push or any other major benefits. **VOODOO 2** 



API SUPPORT: DirectaD

#### GLOBAL MEDIA



DR. STRANGELOVE Peter Sellers adds his personal touch to this black and white movie about the hilarity of accidental nuclear war WARNING: May offend Nazi sympa-

MIRACLE MILE

MINACCE MICE Pop pick up a ring-ing pay phone on Hollywood Boulevard one evening and discover that Ivan has just emptied the silos— what do you do? What DO you do? (BY MORDECAI ROSHWALD)

This bleak '50s novel should be required reading before ANYone is allowed to build a bomb shelter

I HAVE NO MOUTH. ANO I MUST SCREAM (BY HARLAN ELLISON) nates humanity. Keeps five unlucky souls alive. Fortures said survivors. Repeats when necessary. Repeats

his game, or something very like it. should have come out a long time ago - it's the game of the game in the Bond movie Never Soy Never Agoin, It's good oldfashioned ICBM combat in realtime, Global Domination has a techy, pretty and slick, almost slippery look, with the attendant cryptic icons and pluming and colorful vapor-trails you might see looping on the monitors in some throbbing underground goth club. While technically a realtime strategy

Instead, the playing field is the entire globe of planet earth (freely rotatable using the mouse) adorned with the nations of the world, presented with color-coded simplicity. Only in this puzzle, you get to invade, patrol, spy on, carpet-bomb, destabilize, nuke, bio-

game, there are no top-down tank

rushes or fields of volatile wheat-

germ to be collected and refined.

chem, and hose entire nations. You're a new member of an extra-national agency (the Universal Tactical Response Agency or, illogically, ULTRA), charged with keeping some kind of lid on the worldwide post-millenium chaos.

As a member of this elite peacekeeping organization you're cranking off missiles at any pushy superpower, rat ass South American revolution, or towel-headed Middle



It's a B-52 but, sadly, you can't fly it, drink it, or hear it.



map offering upgrades etc.

Eastern dictatorship that pisses you off. For each rapid click of the mouse button, you are instantly rewarded with the launch of a fastmoving but not terribly high-yield ICBM. They don't do a hell of a lot of damage, but they keep the enemy tied up.

Holding the mouse button longer before launch delays your attack, but allows you to power-up weapons such as nukes, to cause greater (and lasting) damage, it's all a matter of preference as to how you time your attacks but every other nation (or LAN opponent, no Internet) is doing exactly the same thing. Hectic, but entertaining,

What you end up with is a global airspace like an electron shell, alive with circling bombers. crisscrossing ICBMs, pluming color-coded contrails, dazzling explosions, energy-bursts, and mushroom clouds. It's enough to give a turn-based gamer the green-apple splatters, and some

players may find the non-stop barrage (during which you'd better be intercepting attacks and subverting enemy nations) too overwhelming to enjoy. Admirably, even the game's war-revenue mechanics are action- and violence-oriented.

Globol Dominotion is kind of NORAD 90210 - all looks, fast pace with a helping of chaos.

- RAINY COLER sincerely believes in gremlins, foiries and the timely shipping of Doikotono.

#### GRAPHICS

Excellent - clean, iconic and colorful with some decent cut scenes.

## SOUND

Orchestral soundtrack, lots of explosions, and audio gameplay cues

#### DEPTH Game rewards clinical strategy and

raw speed. Scenario editor is a plus. DESIGN

Original take on the realtime strategy genre, if a little confusing.





-> Visually clean, nice interface → Desperately tries to innovate -- Bombing France

#### Minuses

-> Easiest mode may be too hard → No Internet plays → No bonus for bombing France

What part of Japan would you like to destroy today? The defense silos? Resource collection points? Nintendo?



# MB hard drive space, 128 MB RAM Blood pudding, anyone?

#### ACCELE-RATED

Blood'2 uses Direct X 6 and Direct 3D to excellent effect, and especially kicks ass on the Nvidia TNT board, running extremely nicely at higher resolutions on even just a P200 MMX with full details.



or most games, the original Blood was not a particularly good game, though the weapons were well-balanced for multiplay, 50 now, hot off the success of Shogo, Monoith has Blood's sequel all done up bright, shiny and new with their Ulti-Tech engine. And, if nothing else, Monoith surve does have a handle on gibs and making weapons that provide those goney bits of gore. And we already knew from the original Blood that Monoith thas the second that Monoith thas the original Blood that Monoith that Monoith thas the original Blood that Monoith thas the second that Monoith that the original Blood that Mo

the ithe sick and twisted bit down pat.

In many ways superior to
Shogo, Blood 2 is thick with atmoghere, humor, and body parts.

Humans no longer look like bizarre
now,
puppets, and the character detail

snego, book z si tinc with aims, shere, humor, and body parts. Humans no longer look like bizarre puppets, and the character detail is striking, with excellent animation. Everything about the game looks great, although the levels still suffer from a distinctly linear look—all sharp edges and straight lines for the most part.

It also has a plot, such as it is. You play the renegade demi-god of evil, Caleb, as he returns to a

ohibite

future earth where the evil group from the original, the Cabal, has turned into a vile corporate monopoly. New to the series are three other characters on Caleb's side called the Chosen. While there is a mode to play as these Chosen, the story gets pushed aside if you aren't Caleb. The plot moves along through occasional in-game cinematics, but, between this and Shogo, it's clear that Monolith really doesn't know how to tell a coherent story. The last part of the game is a series of virtually pointless end boss fights. resulting in a hopelessly muddled and unsatisfying conclusion.

Blood 2 does have a very disthict weapon system. While you can carry so weapons, there are around 30 of them in total, including shodguns, spiner filles, automatic weapons, a howltzer, napalm gun, energy guns, bombs, the flare gun, voodoo doll and others that are both traditional and odd. And what fur they are to use, too. The sniper rifle ends up st. the most important weapon.









(above) Remember boys and girls, sadism is more fun when your opponent is begging. (top) Just an innocent bystander, huh? Aren't we all. (right) Two guns are always better than one, unless of course that one gun is really big and powerful.





The pure variety of vile beasts in Blood 2 means that you rarely run into the same hellish sickos from one level to the next.

since taking enemies down from long-range is imperative.

Level design is generally excellent, with a few glaring flaws, First is the fascination with the subway. The game uses basically the same train and train station level several times, which got old fast. The second, and far bigger flaw, is the sheer difficulty level. On the normal setting, it punishes you with far too overwhelming odds and precious few ammo reloads. The locations are otherwise quite cool, though, featuring cityscapes, tombs, sewers, a meat packing plant, skyscraper, airship, and other dark and evocative places.

#### THE BLOOD CAFE In bosor of Blood 2, we thought some

proper cuising was in order, so here for your dining pleasure are some meals fit for a vampire. BLOOD PUDDING--- What could be finer

der seeds, and flour? Well, my mouth

HAGGIS--- You all know it, but do you an appetizing entrée, what could beat this wondrously edible gibfest. Boil (with love) inside a sheep stomach and

BLOOD SAUSAGE- Sure it's similar to nod pudding, but still special in its own ay. Containing more last four structure including park snouts, tongues and skins, then mixed with salt, enion pow der, black pepper, marjoram, ground all spice, buckwheat or barley, and to top it all off, plenty of yummy be I blood

Blood 2 also shares Shogo's bugs. Out of the box, Internet play is virtually nonexistent, weapons get irretrievably stuck in walls at times, there were plenty of clipping problems, and weapon effects hurt you through a wall. Al is brain dead at times. Line of sight for enemies doesn't seem to go up, and taking advantage of the obvious gaps in their IQ was incredibly easy. When in visual range, however, especially when new monsters spawn in, they can be incredibly challenging with accurate aim and impressive dodging abilities.

The audio portion of the game is excellent, with solid tunes, sound effects and audio cues, Caleb sounds just like Darkman, and some of his one-liners are humorous, as are the enemies' taunts, hissing things like "Come out, we won't hurt you "

While it's a shame that the game has to be patched right out of the chute, none of the bugs, except the lack of decent Internet play, are so noticeable that they cut down the entertainment value too far. While the story could have been far better, it at least provides a nicely dark backdrop for the action. The difficulty level is incredibly sadistic (it's more fun to play on the easy setting), but just the same Blood 2 is a damn fine time when you're in the mood for a lot of the old ultra-violence.

- Even voodoo dolls ore obsolutely no help in getting IASON D'APRILE o dote.



10

#### GRAPHICS

Even better than Shogo, with detailed characters, and a dark atmosphere.

SOUND Excellent, The sound effects, voices,

and music are all top-notch

#### DEPTH

Wall to wall blood feet. Not much depth, but great, intense action. DESIGN

Solid level design architecturally, but the punishing number of enemies is a bit much. Story goes nowhere





Balls to the wall shooting action --- A wide array of monsters → Awesome audio work







Bachelor #1 is a deranged psycopath from hell. He likes severing appendages and is looking for a good woman (to eat).

Normal red blood cells are shaped like donuts - mmm...blood

donuts

# **Bad Taste**



Howard Stern's Private Parts



Something About Mary



Old David Letterman



Carmaggeddon II



PC Accelerator

# Good Taste



Martha Stewart's Living



Steel Magnolias



New David Letterman



Driver's Education '99



Other Magazines



# Fatal Abyss

The nimble action of Descent meets the murkiness of The Hunt for Red October

#### ACCELE-RATED

Some good watery ripple effects make use of your 3Dfx-powered card. The Glide-only support now looks a little limiting — In software there are the familiar lagged edges and a general ugliness to the mutky depths.



API SUPPORT: Glide

## **GETTING WET**

HERE IS A QUICK LOOK AT SOME PEOPLE WE ASSOCIATE WITH WATER AND HOW THEY MIGHT HAVE AFFECTED THE GAME WERE THEY INCLUDED

# PAMELA ANDERSON

#### H2O ASSOCIATION → He telep.

cally summons fish to aid in fighting supercriminals; of the superhardes h IN FATAL ABYSS -- Since the physics in the game aren't even close to being realistic, w., don't see vily Aquaman and som, death-dealing fish wouldn't

#### H20 ASSOCIATION ...

IN FATAL ABYSS --- Heil, the game



hothor vou're numped or offended by Fatal Abvss depends in part on how much of a hardcore submarine geek you are. A damaged subset of humanity

definitely has an unseemly attraction to underwater combat. It's that most dismal and ghastly arena of human violence, in which one crucial hit spells gradual death by drowning. If you start to grin at the idea of these stakes with none of the cumbersome fluid dynamics of the real world, you're in for a treat with Fatal Abyss. But if you're expecting to find

the kind of grim, silent, calculating hunt-and-peck death-dealing of your favorite Hollywood submarine epic, you are S.O.L. One of the defining characteristics of Fatal Abyss is its nimble, twitchy, Descent-style dogfights. The underwater craft presented in this tale of megacorporation combat maneuver with the zip and twitch of X-Wings or TIE fighters, rather than the booming, flabby turns and one-ping-only torpedo conflicts of present-day submarines. Both the Eco-Systems and Pro-

teus Tech shins come in light medium, and heavy varieties. Search-and-destroy missions, along with sabotage efforts, are part of your fight for corporate dominance. The game takes place in the relatively near future, so weapons range from the recognizably efficient (tracking torpedoes, neutral-buoyancy mines, and electromagnetic-pulse devices) to the



fantastically clean (an unspecified rapid-fire plasma gun whose ballistic energy bolts defy the very bydrodynamic nature of deep-sea combat). More realistic weapons of considerably higher yield require a lock-on and move slowly. and a solid hit offers a nice bubbling cascade of twisted metal chunks when the offending target is eradicated.

A big part of Fatal Abyss' charm lies in the info-warfare scheme, which allows you to select the amount of "presence" you wish to offer - you can switch between active and passive sonar modes, rig for silent running, and even shut down the illuminating floods in the hope of catching your louder, bumbling opponents with their submariner pants down. Indeed, one of the finer moments of deep-sea combat is that horrible "ohno" second when two combatants - both running silent, deep, and dark suddenly detect each other at point-blank range and simultaneously ash-can the cloak-and-dagger routine, opening fire with everything they have. Fatal Abyss as a single-player game feels dashed

off, but the possibilities of 16player deathmatches over the seven different mans are far more attractive. The multi-player game offers some fast, and unrealistic play that is good enough to save this game from the deep, murky depths of our charts. - CHRIS HUDAK and ROB

SMITH are bath in the dag-

hause as a result of a recent incident in a Vegas strip club.

#### **GRAPHICS**

Moody, murky deep-ocean gamescapes look good.

#### SOUND

A mixed bag. Neither excellent nor offensive. A variety at the very least.

#### DEPTH Tactically engrossing, but about as deep as the shallow end.

#### DESIGN

Solid and occasionally frantic, but fundamentally uninspiring arcade





-) Paranoia of sub-marine combat Dogfight-style physics
 Depth-level restrictions allow for desperation tactics

Minuses

Unrealistic underwater physics Rapid-fire weapon underwater?
 Only two sides



Better to light a single flare than to curse the darkness because somebody might hear you.

#### Got a year to spend learning the ropes?

# FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL

and pedals

#### ACCELE-RATED

GPL supports Voodoo (finally!) and Rendition cards only (a beta OpenGL driver was available at

VOODOO 2

RENDITION

MATROX G200

N/A

press time). On my P200 with 64MB RAM and an Obsidian 12MB 3Dfx card, it ran pretty piss-poorly, averaging around 12fps with low detail settings and 512 resolution

N/A RIVA TNT

API SUPPORT: DaD, Glide

#### LEGENDS





#### ction-oriented racers like Need for Speed and Motocross Madness

can provide memorable moments of exhilaration and mayhem. But they often lose their appeal quickly because they are not challenging enough. Cue Sierra Sports' high-end, highmaintenance Grand Prix Legends.

Yes, it's a hardcore sim, but I just couldn't resist the appeal of racing these brutish 1967 Grand Prix cars. It harks back to the golden age of racing - when men were men (and women were men and cows were nervous) and the sport threw safety to the wind. The wreck-inducing potential of zooming around hellaciously twisted, crowded, and narrow tracks at breakneck speeds was just too great to pass up. And, after many hours spent wrecking nearly every one of GPL's seven historic cars I took out on each of the 11 historic tracks, I can safely say that GPL lives up to that poten-

Unfortunately, this depth is both the boon and the bane of GPL. It is very, very tough. The first two pages of the manual include notes from the developers urging patience and offering tips on how to improve your driving. As the developers themselves state,

tial - and then some.



This may be the last time you see the competition.

driving these cars feels like driving on ice, and that means you'll spin and spin and spin some more when you first get out on the track. An arcade mode would doubtless broaden GPL's appeal.

However, if you've been hankering for more beef in your racing, GPL presents a veritable bounty to sink your teeth into. You can tinker minutely with the entrails of your race machine in the virtual garage. adjusting such things as tire PSI. degrees of wheel camber, and transmission ratios

GPL does include a novice racing mode with options for automatic shifting and throttle and brake assistance, but you'll never be the champ unless you take total control. You've got to beat the best racers of the era, such as lim Clark and Jack Brabham (ask your dad who they were), and it will take months



Secure your helmut 'cuz you'll be doing lots of this.

of practice and all your skills to do so. If you crave more-fallible human opponents, GPL supports games with up to 20 players over modem. serial connection LAN and Internet or a combination of these methods.

Though frustratingly difficult at times, GPL is unique, and it successfully captures the essence of 1967 Grand Prix racing, Give it a spin, if you dare.

- STEVE KLETT hasn't yet won a race, But he's still trying.

#### GRAPHICS Looks awesome on the highest set-

tings, but it will run in super-slo-mo. SOUND

## Great engine and skid sounds. Flying

metal never sounded better

#### DEPTH You could play this game for a year

and not win, but want to keep trying. DESIGN

# Captures the feel of 1967-era racing. We guess. We wouldn't really know.









#### Minuses

 Realistic, challenging car physics → Tough Al opponents
→ Dull interface

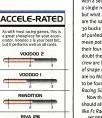


TARZAN

# Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation

#### "Who the hell is Michael Schmidtke?"





Formula One racing sim on the market with a sequel that doesn't feature a single real-life driver or team, but what are you gonna do? These are the same people that charge 30 bucks for a microscopic portion of puréed goose liver (sorry - I mean paté de fais aras) at one of their four-star restaurants, so I doubt the French-based Ubi Soft crew are likely to get too bent out of shape about the fact that there are no McLarens or Schumachers to be found in Manaca Grand Prix Racina Simulatian 2. Now that that's off my chest, I should also mention that - just

loody Frenchmen. It takes some nerve

to replace the best

like F1 Racina Simulatian before it - MGPRS2 is a cutting-edge racing sim that still blows most other PC racers right off the track. Ubi Soft may not have anted up the money needed to obtain the proper F1 licensing with this new version, but it's still managed to crank out a first-rate racing simulator that offers all the visual splendor of the original with an improved driving model and even deeper gameplay, (And, OK, the names and car textures are all editable from within the game if you feel like nerdishly pursuing that option )

F1RS had some of the most



Enzo Ferrari would roll over in his grave about this paint job.



See that corner up there? Best prepare to turn that rig.

kick-ass graphics ever seen in a racing sim, and they're every bit as impressive in Manaca GP. Each of the 17 tracks in the game including a brand-new pair of venues in Spain and Austria has been lushly rendered in glorious light-sourced detail. The cheap bastards at Ubi Soft may have tagged them with generic national labels like Belgium and Germany (instead of Spa and Hockenheim), but their authenticity is still top-notch.

Manaca GP's high-fidelity physics model has been tweaked so that running these cars in full realism mode with all the driving aids switched off makes for a much more challenging ride than that in F1RS. Gameplay options have also been padded considerably and now include a Career mode, a Scenario mode (in which you try to attain a specific goal within a race), and a Retro mode (with some cool 1950s F1 roadsters). Dedicated Internet play

through a free Ubi Soft gaming web site should also be up and running by the time you read this. l guess if our Gallic friends can get us to buy Perriér at beer prices it's not surprising to see them trying to feed us a Schmidtke at Schumacher prices. They're just damn lucky Manaca GP is more filling and tastes good or I might have really felt the need to slap them around for it.

- ANDY MAHOOD's favorite meal is a Craissandwich with french fries sa dan't get an his case.

#### GRAPHICS

Its awesome visuals and silky frame rate are what 3D acceleration lives for.

## SOUND

Engine sounds are tinny and tire squeals sound like a cat in a blender.

#### DEPTH Additional modes and dedicated Net play greatly deepen the game

DESIGN

F1RS was a great design. Dumping the valuable F1 license downgrades Monaco GP to merely good.







-> Improved driving model Minuses

→ No real-life drivers or cars --- Cheesy sound effects -> Horrid paint Jobs on cars

#### HOME SWEET HOME

API SUPPORT: Glide, Direct 3D

HOCKEY PLAYERS --- Chicago. Hom to BOWLERS...) Milwauke... Boss e largest number of groupies in th untry who have the hots for fat, Id guys with smooth balls. Lots of





If I'm not mistaken this looks quite a bit like a racing game, no?

# Redguard

#### A beautiful world without a tomb to raid

#### ACCELE-RATED

Despite maintaining its archaic Dos-based roots, the XnGine pulis off some impressive 3D accelerated effects. While only supporting Gilde, the quality difference over the software version is immense. The many polygons and textures make Voodoo 2 the best choice and the card you'il enjoy the greatest effects from.

V00D00 S

V00D00 I

RIVA TNT

MATROX G200

API SUPPORT: Glide

ranchises are the big thing now for software publishers, and as one of the few remaining independent, smaller

developer/publishers, Bethesda Softworks has managed to fare quite ricely with its long-running Elder Scrolls universe. Despite problems with some overly buggy products, Bethesda always seems capable of spinning a compelling yarn. That's certainly the case with the franchise-extending third-person action adventure, Redguard. Set in the Hammerfell region of The Elder's Croll's Tamifel world. you pick up the role of Cyrus, a former Redguard who left the island of Stros M'kai after an unfortunate run-in with his sister's husband.

Bethesda began this project using the Xnoline that powered Daggerful, Battlespire, and even X-Car. Given its DOS origins the team managed to pull a great deal of style and substance in to the environments – and the ability to control fully the configured in which can also be configured in the setup) lets you get the best look at the details. They're colorful and varied, with the streets of SYTOS M'kia Contrasting strongly with the Dwarven mines, Governor's castle and other locations.

As you wander the streets, Redguard has a wonderfully nonlinear feel. There are people to talk to (and avoid) and a strong and very deep story to uncover. While you're always subtly pushed in the right direction, there's no real time limit. Balancing these pacing issues was always going to be a key factor in Redguard's interest level. While the subquests are varied and interesting (finding a password, helping the blind and the deaf, recovering this, fetching that...) the game takes a while to get going. There's an awful lot to listen to, even though it is mildly immersive. Thing is, it just takes so damn long and some of the voice acting is pathetically hammy (the voice of Mariah is so grating I desperately wished that murder was an option).







Not without a few quirks, it's possible to be hacked to death and not be able to respond if you begin a conversation just as a guard moves to attack. Ensuring the politically correct motif (there's not a drop of blood), the only person "for hire" at the docks is female.







Puzzle solving is not as annoyingly boring as it is in many games. All the tests have a fairly logical solution, although some of the items that you need to find are cryptically hidden.

A well-designed log aids trackworks well here, but is generally ing of all the information you uncover. It automatically records the important snippets and allows you to add your own notes. Conversations use the familiar method of selecting a topic and then following the branching paths to find what you need. It's not inspired, but serves its function - most characters are dry, and I wished that some who attempted humor or sarcasm didn't, it rarely worked. I found the control with the

Of course, there are plenty of people to upset in this lengthy quest. Sword-only combat worked surprisingly well given the fact that multiple enemies won't attack, allowing just one to close while the others egg him on. It never seemed convoluted, however, as the other attackers would move in to sensible positions (like behind you) ready to strike should you best your current foe. Their Al

poor elsewhere - the living, breathing, nonlinear world is somewhat upset by prison guards watching you happily rope swing around the catacombs and doing little to interfere. The thrust, hack, and slash combat is fairly simple. but there's enough movement in the enemies (especially the more powerful bosses) to require you to develop your dueling skills.

Microsoft SideWinder to be a little

-ROB SMITH never mentioned Lara once during the course of

Level design varied between

so crafting. Sloppy power-up

placement (health potions ran-

door, for example) pushed the

among familiar themes.

And the bugs? Redauard



sFor every swash-buckling hero there are abovy of beaut ful habes just dying



LOVE INTEREST-3 CHARM-> This love? showed plenty of skill handling Zor ro's blade





LOVE INTEREST-CHARM-> Earthy, yet



SKYWALKER LOVE INTEREST CHARM-) He didn't



Excellent throughout, colorful, eye catching and varied.

#### SOUND

Good tunes (very Zelda-esque in its background subtlety), so-so effects

#### DEPTH Oh, it's deep - you're not completing this in a hurry.

DESIGN

Variable – some strong puzzles with convoluted ones, interesting levels







#### Minuses

No blood -- you what? → High system specs for best play
→ Mariah's voice

# Test Drive Off-Road 2

#### So generic the box should be black-and-white

#### ACCELE-RATED

Good water effects and smoother textures on the environments and ehicles make average use Voodoo chipset optimization. The specific Glide support means that this game just looks better on the Voodoo chipsets. Sorry TNT own ers, these are just the facts.



RIVA TNT API SUPPORT: D3D, Glide



without any of the fun.

n paper, Test Drive Off-Road 2 appears to have everything needed to provide

some good thrills behind the wheel, Unfortunately, it takes just a short time to realize that the ingredients listed on the box are pure vanilla - and so is TDOR2.

Top billing in the list of ingredients is the chance to drive the realistically modeled Hummer (y'know, the big-ass off-road monster that grossly overpaid vuppie types insist on driving through city streets and not getting dirty), Nineteen other vehicles also inspired Accolade to fork out the licensing dough, supplying the Dodge Ram, Chenowth FAV, Ford F-150 and Explorer, and Jeep Grand Cherokee and Wrangler, Since they're all more or less designed for off-road, you get to throw them around over 12 tracks covering snow, ocean surf, and glorious mud.

You can pick any vehicle and race a single contest against five other drivers. Alternately you can go for the whole shootin' match in the World Tour, which consists of five race circuits that get progressively faster and more competitive. Between races you have the opportunity to sell your vehicle and



Watching the races from a different camera angle fails to make them any more interesting. So there.

upgrade to a better machine - if you've earned the cash. You can also compete against up to five human drivers over a LAN or the

Controlwise, TDOR2 could not be simpler you can play the game with just the four arrow keys on your keyboard. Or you can hook up

your favorite racing wheel, joystick, or gamepad, Naturally, the wheel gives the best racing sensation: a force feedback wheel is by far the best way to get some feeling for the vehicles over the rolling, pothole-filled terrain.

I had visions of leaving mudsplattered and wrecked vehicles in my wake as I raced to the finish line. Too bad the graphics are so lackluster - particularly the vehicles, which look like they're made up of about five polygons each. The terrain graphics are muted and washed out, which often makes it hard to distinguish a pool of mud from the road. Also, the vehicles take no damage, which means the wipeouts are exceedingly dull. (This is the shortcoming of all those licenses - companies like Jeep and Ford apparently do not want gamers to see how their vehicles really react to jumping off

Then there are trees and obstacles you can run over and trees and obstacles you can't, which all look the same. And the largely linear race tracks are designed to force you to look for shortcuts, but often you'll run a few feet off the track toward seemingly open space only to hit an invisible brick wall. Fun? No. TDOR2 could have been a decent

cliffs and rolling over.)

game. It's too bad so many resources were invested in obtaining fancy licenses (including the music soundtrack by Gravity Kills and Fear Factory) and so little in enhancing gameplay. For my money there's better entertainment to be found in racers like Need for



How to make boxy off-road vehicles look even boxier.

Speed III (or I and II, for that matter), which managed the licenses and the gameplay, and even Monster Truck Madness II (but not /). Skip it, unless you are absolutely determined to get a Hummer any way you can.

- STEVE KLETT moved ta Calarada so that he cauld take his Explarer aff-raad.

#### GRAPHICS

Below average, particularly for a Glide-powered game.

#### SOUND

Average at best. The soundtrack with Gravity Kills and Fear Factory isn't bad.

# DEPTH

Shallow-not smashing up vehicles is like the opposite of fun.

DESIGN

Nonexistent, except for the brand-name vehicles.



Lots of different vehicles → Nicely varied tracks

→ Pretty cool original music



→ No save feature during a race circ → Lackluster graphics -> No smashing up Hummers, dammit

#### PUBLISHER --- Ripcord Games REQUIRED --- P166, 32MB RAM, 1MB PCI video card, 4X CD-ROM, 150MB hard drive space IDEAL -- P200 MMX, 32MB RAM. 8X CO-ROM, Voodoo 2 card, 320MB

# Space Bunnies Must Die

#### Lara Croft meets Jerry Springer

#### ACCELE-RATED

hard drive space

Not exactly a waste of a good 3D accelerator, but even native GI support doesn't create any note-worthy or new effects. However, playing the game in software is a total waste of time.







prefer breast meat to thighs.

#### BUNNIES WE LOVE



Everyone's heard



the ears of the pullcame out of Hugh Hefore's bunty fac-tory and that's good enough for us



LOLA BUNNY

ICA RABB

# imme one rea-Chapman summed it up pretty well

son to stay here and I'll turn right back around." Tracy

in that sucky ballad of hers and it's a shame the people at Ripcord Games didn't follow her advice when finishing Space Bunnies Must Die, Other than some campy humor, there's not a whole lot going on in this poorly constructed Tomb Raider knockoff that makes you want to stay with it for very long.

Space Bunnies is a 3D adventure that employs a third-person perspective to pace you through its offthe-wall comic-book plot. As Allison Huxter, a rodeo-riding truck-stop waitress from New Mexico, you're out to rescue your twin sister, locelyn, after some mutant alien space rabbits abduct her. Armed with a set of high-tech hare guns (as well as a few dance moves that'll mesmerize your floppy-eared foes), you must venture into the bowels of the Snace Bunnies' volcanic base in search of your captive sibling.

On the surface, Space Bunnies seems to have most of the key ingredients that make up a decent adventure game, but it screws the pooch (bunny?) right out of the box because of its abvsmal control interface. For some inexplicable reason there is no mouse or joystick support, so you're at the



camera manipulations.

tive jump-pause-leap-grab-climb

unimaginative reflex tests are

cise analog control over your

onscreen character, but they

demand almost superhuman

tough enough when you have pre-

patience when you have to rely on

some imprecise key commands to

hopscotch your way over the many

save-game routine in SBMD is one

deals where you have to find a save

beacon before you can capture your

progress to the hard disk, Lessee -

a clunky control interface that

makes you die repeatedly, and a

save-game routine that forces you

of those loathsome console-type

As if that weren't bad enough, the

lava flows and bottomless pits.



Allison mistimed a jump.

She'll burn in hell for that.

mercy of some counter-intuitive over and over every time you do bite keyboard commands as you try to it. Can you guess where I'm going make your way through the game's with this? 10 lengthy levels. To make matters Space Bunnies might have been worse, most of the game's puzzles

moderately diverting if Ripcord had consist of some annovingly repetiat least given us some tight cleavage shots of its buxom trailer-trash exercises that demand perfect exeheroine. The fact that it couldn't cution and timing to pull off. These even give us a decent camera angle to do that pretty much sums up the game and the heroine one big controller tease.

> - ANDY MAHOOD believes that truck-stop waitresses cauld very well be the perfect wamen.

#### GRAPHICS

Tearing, clipping, and other glitches detract from the decent visuals.

## SOUND

Reasonably good but the sound effects are uniformly weak and cartoonish

DEPTH Ten levels is a lot, but the crappy con-trols may force an early retirement.

#### DESIGN

This bad Tomb Raider knockoff doesn't even offer decent boob sho to make up for its other failings





One or two entertaining puzzles Minuses

→ Criminally Insane keyboard control → Incredibly frustrating console-style save-game feature



This sure is one tough chick. See how she can hang on by just her thumbnails?

Sure signs of a white trash woman ----> Feathered hair, married to brother, likes Dan, swallows



# Head games



um, well, knowing when to butt-stomp in NFL Blitz, an athlete has to use his head. But upon further review, maybe all athletes aren't quite so bright, despite their collège degrees. Here are a few real quotes from some of sport's best and brightest.

tight coaching strategy in NBA Live 99, or

"The word 'genius' isn't applicable in football. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein." - IOF THEISMAN FORMER NFL QUARTERBACK

"We're going to turn this team around 360 degrees." — JASON KIDD, NBA GUARD

"I'm going to graduate on time, how long it takes."

- SENIOR BASKETBALL PLAYER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

"You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six."

— YANKEES QUOTESTER YOGI BERRA

"He treats us like men. He lets us wear earrings."

- TORRIN POLK, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON RECEIVER, ON HIS COACH, JOHN JENKINS



"Can I vote for myself?"

— NEW YORK RANGER
DEFENSEMAN ULF SAMUELSSON WHEN ASKED WHO THE DIRTIEST PLAYER IN

"I was pumped up for this match. I didn't want to lose to a girl." — AMY PERINUTTER AFTER PINNING HAWTHORNE HIGH SCHOOL'S CATRINA CARRIALES IN HER STATE'S FIRST ALL-FEMALE WRESTLING MATCH

"I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body." - WINSTON BENNETT, UNIVERSITY
OF KENTUCKY BASKETBALL FORWARD

"Are you any relation to your brother Mary?"

— LEON WOOD, NEW JERSEY NETS GUARD
TO STEVE ALBERT, NETS TV COMMENTATOR

Wish: To end all of the killing in the world Hobbies: Hunting and

SHING

FROM PERSONAL STATS

OF CALIFORNIA ANGEL

BRYAN HARVEY, FLASHED

ON THE SCOREBOARD AT

ANAHEIM STADIUM

"The doctors X-rayed my head and found nothing." — BASEBALL GREAT DIZZY DEAN AFTER BEING HIT ON THE HEAD BY A BALL IN THE 1934 WORLD SERIES

"PII be back,"

HEAVYWEIGHT BOXER PETER MCNEELEY,
 FIVE DAYS AFTER FIGHTING MIKE TYSON.

"He's a guy who gets up at six o'clock in the morning regardless of what time it is."

- LOU DUVA, VETERAN BOXING TRAINER, ON THE SPARTAN TRAINING REGIME OF HEAVYWEIGHT ANDREW GOLOTA

— SHAQUILLE O'NEAL ON WHETHER HE HAD VISITED THE PARTHENON DURING A VISIT TO GREECE



# THE STANDINGS

This month the only new updates to the standings are basketball and golf which each get a new frontrunner. By the way, *Blitz* does not count in the football division,

#### **GAME TITLE** BASKETBALL NBA Live 99 NBA Live 98 NBA Action

NCAA 99 GameDay 99 Madden 99

Links LS 99 Tiger Woods 99 Golden Tee Golf Fox Sports Golf

NHL Hockey 99 NHL Hockey 98 Powerplay 98

High Heat 99 Triple Play 99 VR Baseball 200 HardBall 6 Microsoft Baset

World Cup 98 Fox Sports Socce Sensible Soccer 98

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r 98	0	1

#### RIDING OUT THE LOCKOUT

This month we review NBA Live 99, which has shipped while the real NBA is still under an owner's lockout. In the game, all players are treated as equals, but in real life there's a big difference between the highest-paid players and the guys at the bottom of the barrel making league minimum. Here's how the two NBA players have been ha dling the difficulties of the lockout.

	PATRICK EWING, NEW YORK KNICKS	RUSTY LARUE, CHICAGO BULLS
Player's salary	\$20,500,000	\$242,000 (league minimum)
How they cut back on costs	Sliced caviar budget by 20%	Quit feeding the family dog
Their next cut to be made	Insurance on eighth Rolls Royce	Wife's health insurance
How they are planning for the possibility of a long lockout	Scheduling a guest appearance on Moesha	Checking prices for black-market children
If lockout ended season today they could take a job at	NBC as basketball specialist	Der Weinerschnitzel as corndog specialist

#### DEVELOPER --- Dynamic PUBLISHER -> Sierra REQUIRED --- Pgo, 16MB RAM 75 MB hard drive space

IDEAL -> Ps66, 32MB RAM

#### Hey, wasn't this game called Skiing 98? Voodoo 2 card, Wooly mittens

## ACCELE-RATED

No accelerator is going to make the bland, sparse grap ing 99 look very good. DUAL VOODOO 2 (SU)

V00D00 2 MATROX G200

RIVA TNT

API SUPPORT: DirectaD





Trick moves are available, but they aren't very exciting.





Wide World of Sports"? At the beginning of every episode a deepvoiced announcer talked about the thrill of victory as various athletes celebrated classic triumphs. and the agony of defeat as a skier tumbled down the edge of a ski jump. After playing Skiing 1999, we finally understand what that guy felt like. This game is the second skiing

emember ABC's

Skiing 99

title from Sierra this year, but the difference between it and Skiing 98 is nominal at best. Voodoo Rush support has been added (woohoo), as have two boring fake slopes (Mount Dynamix and Mount Sierra - or Mount Laughable A and Mount Laughable B as they were nicknamed here). But that's it - otherwise, it's almost a complete rehash of the last Sierra Skiing game, If PCXL had been around to write about the first one, this review would end right now, but in the spirit of thoroughness we will strive on.

Starting with its boxy, bland graphics (snow is, well, white snow), Skiing 1999 lacks the basic visuals to compete with today's 3D-accelerated sports games. To



The sense of speed is conveyed well in Skiing 99, but the sense of control and realism are nowhere to be found.

make matters worse, the bland graphics make it difficult to gauge speed and momentum just by looking at the environment. The sound is not much better, adding little atmosphere to an already empty game.

The physics just don't feel right either and don't come anywhere near recreating the adrenaline rush of downhill skiing. Even though Skiing 1999 includes five modes (slalom, downhill, and

Super G among them), each feels pretty much like the others. So what you've got is a game that is not realistic enough for skiing fans and not exciting enough for casual fans.

## **GRAPHICS**

Bland, ugly, boring.

#### SOUND

The skiing sounds are OK, but everything else sucks.

#### CONTROL

Generally lousy, but controls best with the Freestyle Pro.

#### REALISM

If skiing were this boring, Aspen





Wrecks are cool the first time you see them

No frostbite

#### Minuses

→ Graphics
→ Everything else



This game is most fun when Picabo wrecks, Here's hoping there's a tree just off camera.

#### DEVELOPER --- > Access So PUBLISHER --- > Access So REQUIRED -> P150, 32MB RAM 60 MB hard drive space

IDEAL --- P300, 64MB RAM AMB graphics card, 335 MB hard driv space, sleeve of Titleists

#### ACCELE-RATED

Links LS 99 is strictly a 2D gam (with some nominal, and ques tionable "3D objects") so you don't need a 3D accelerator. However, you will benefit from a good 2D card or a good 2D/3D rd like the foll

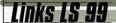
VOODOO BANSHEE

MATROX G200 RIVA TNT

NOTE: These scores are for aD acceleration only



gallery with his short pants.



#### A cut above the competition

ou've heard it endless times before in discussions about computer golf games: "It just doesn't measure up to Links LS." Well this is one review in which you won't read that statement, mainly because we're looking at the next in the Links series. True to its pedigree Links LS 99 is the best yet of an excellent golf series that shows no signs of sitting back on its position and letting the hordes of pretenders grab its crown.

The improvements to

the game this year are exactly what you look for in a sports series. Now tourna ments are complete with galleries that react to how you play: mumbling with disappointment after a particularly nasty shot, cheering in the distance at other holes, and snapping pictures as you putt for a long eagle. Another excellent addition is the new modes-of-play editor, which lets you create the exact kind of golfing match that you like best. The 30 provided modes include the usual skins and best ball, but some, such as My Kinda Game (which rewards you for staying off the fairways), add tremendously to the typical staid golf match.

While these new features do improve the game, the most





Stroke swing

method. You now have a choice between typical two- and three-click mouse swings and a mouse-driven swing. Using this new method, you choose a club, hold the mouse button, move to the right and then move quickly to the left, hitting the mouse button to snap your wrists and send the ball flying. A whole slew of golf games have attempted variations on this mouse-swing style with less success. Links doesn't solve any problems in this area, but the option's addition supplies an alternative for the more daring

golfer. Graphically, Links LS is still unmatched by any golf game, even though it is not much of an improvement over last year's version. And since it supports resolutions at unbelievably high levels it can look absolutely amazing on high-end PCs with good video cards. The player animations are rather bland and new "3D objects" on the course add little, but these are just minor gripes against an otherwise fine product.

All the additions would be completely worthless if the game did not play well, but this is where Links LS shines. With its excellent ball physics and tight control, the game simply feels and plays better than any competitor. Also its amazing number of options are more than just bullet points on a box, they all add to the realism and gameplay. So 1999 will be the same as the years before, with Links LS clearly the best golf game on the market.

#### GRAPHICS

The courses look amazing and the rendering speed is not that bad. Beautiful but flat.

SOUND Much improved over last year's version, Birds chirp, etc.

CONTROL

Three different swing modes give it tight control any way you like it.

REALISM Golf doesn't get any more real than it





Great graphics → Options galore

#### Minuses

-> Bland player animations → Steep learning curve
→ Not much else















TACKLES, JUKED ONE CORNER AND BLEW
THE NUMBERS OFF THE FREE SAFETY.

C'MON, LET THE GUY DANCE.



**Gamed**ay 99





www.989sports.com
Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 12

#### DEVELOPER -> EA Spo PUBLISHER -- EA Sport REQUIRED --- P166 24MR RAM 3dfx card, 90 MB hard drive space

IDEAL --- > P233, 64MB RAM

Voodoo 2 card, 165 hard drive space

#### ACCELE-RATED

NBA Live '99 looks very realistic on a Voodoo based system and runs smoothest on a Voodoo 2 SU configuration. H oks the best on a TNT by a longshot DUAL VOODOO 2 (SU)







Why doesn't the franchise mode have a lockout feature?



Head tracking keeps your player's eyes on the ball.

# NBA Live 99

#### A cure for the common lockout

v the time you read this, the NBA labor dispute should be neatly resolved. The owners should have returned to their usual whining; the players should have settled into their typical routine of playing ball, going to court for drug convictions, and assaulting their coaches. If the lockout isn't over, then Heaven help us all, Currently this game is our only link to real pro hoops, but you know what? It's a pretty good replacement.

Maybe it's the actual NBA-player faces that make things feel so real. Each of the players in the league had his face photographed in full 3D, and EA used that data for thier player faces. You don't need a name tag underneath Sam Cassell's deformed noggin, because you can recognize it in a second. The

elegant use of changing expressions solves the problem of the zombie look to most in-game characters, and the recognizable players enable you to intuitively find the right one for each situation. Aside from the considerable cos-

metic improvement, NBA Live has some seriously beefed-up gameplay. For the first time, a PC basketball game feels nearly as alive and controllable as its console brethren. The players feature smoother animations than ever before, and the commands can be remapped to controllers quickly and easily. Response is tight, and player Al is also top-notch, with the guys off the ball reading the defense and scrambling to get to the open spot. The players also vary significantly in size and ability. Big players look and play big,

While the game has more than its share of high points, a few things keep it from being the perfect replacement for NBA basketball on TV. First and foremost is player switching. When you are running, you cannot switch defensive players. Usually that is not a

and the marquee guys are obviously better than the rank and file.



Jordan's not here, but you can download user-created patches with a fully functional number twenty three,

problem, but the first time you try to stop a full-court break with an out-of-place defenseman, you'll be screaming at the controls. So many control options have been included that they are no longer useful. Basketball games should have a simple three-button control for all basic moves (pass/switch,

shoot/block, steal); Live 99 makes you use all six buttons and even demands more. Some of the best sports games of all time played on the Sega Genesis, which only had three. Developers had to be clever when they assigned moves to buttons, it's time for a little more of that ingenuity.

Basketball is a game of quickly changing strategy, so on-the-fly play-calling is a must. That option is included here, but poorly implemented. For starters, you have to hold a button down for a few seconds to use the play-calling menu. In pro basketball, if you stand still for a few seconds, you're going to get picked. Furthermore, the plays are listed only by their button functions, causing you to waste even more valuable seconds.

Despite these flaws, Live '99 manages to be what few (if any) PC basketball games have been in the past: both graphically impressive

and fun. If you are a hardcore hoops fan frustrated at the attitude of the NBA players, you might want to give this game a try. At least you won't have to sit through a lockout in this one.

#### GRAPHICS

Finally looks better than the console

SOUND The announcer is dull, and dunk

nds are unexciting

CONTROL Tight, but better design would enable u to use more of the options easily.

REALISM

For the most part players play and



- Great-looking players
- -> Excellent dunks Polished Franchise mode

#### Minuses

- -> Underwhelming game sounds and commentary
- Too many controls for average -> Needs a high-end PC for full detail

DEVELOPER -- Point of View PUBLISHER -- Midway Ente REQUIRED -- P166, 24MB RAM

NFL Blitz 3dfx card, 530 MB hard drive space IDEAL -- P233, 64MB RAM, Voodoo 2,

It's a high-stepping, trash-talking good time

# 150 hard drive space, mouth guard ACCELE-RATED

NFL Biltz looks great if you have the right hardware. It plays best on a SLI setup, but runs fine on other top 3D cards



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

FL Blitz ain't football. There are no penalties, no injuries, and only seven guys each side of the field. Pass interference is an integral part of defense, and late hits are positively required. The players cuss, catch, and deck each other with gleeful abandon in a grossly exaggerated cartoon style. And while this sounds a lot like the Dallas

Cowboy training camp, it ain't foot-

What NFL Blitz is, though, is fun. The controls are easy to learn but hard to master, and the sheer variety of things that can happen during any one game - from clothesline tackles to linebacker flattening stiff-arms - keeps gameplay constantly fresh. The control is simple and very responsive. If you throw a good move, you will see the result in the form of a bone-crushing tackle or long touchdown run. This makes you feel like your skill as a player (as opposed to a coach) has the biggest effect on the game. The game also provides great visual and aural rewards for great moves; for the first time in a football game, you can really "feel" the hits. Whether it is the ecstatic

announcer, the rumbling tackle

sounds, or the sight of a 300-



football game, but it certainly has the best hits.

sound draw you into the game. The frame rate is blazing fast. and on a good PC it is actually too fast - you'll probably want to lock it at 6ofps to keep it playable. The characters are smoothly animated (apart from a few collision problems), and the graphics are arcade quality, blowing away the console versions. Blitz was made for an arcade system powered by the Voodoo 2, and the transfer to PC is near flawless.

Still, just because Blitz is all about action, action, and more action, that doesn't mean there aren't subtleties as well. Knowing how to use the handful of plays (18 on offense, nine on defense) and their variants, particularly against a human opponent, is the secret to consistently winning, Understanding how your opponent calls plays is equally important and equally

Playing against other people is the best way to Blitz, because the computer Al isn't particularly impressive - it cheats like Bill Clinton when it falls behind. That's why it's a shame there's no modem or net play, only support for two people at the same machine. But probably the biggest letdown is the failure to include a season mode or play editor, features that somehow made it into

the Nintendo 64 version but not the PC one (though a later PC patch does add the season play). Still, those are minor problems with what is otherwise one helmetknocker of a game — and one heck of an arcade port.

#### GRAPHICS

Player detail takes a backseat to frame rate, but the visuals are at least arcade quality.

#### SOLIND

The announcer, the hits and music are all way over the top - yet it works

#### CONTROL Most gamepads lack the precision you'll find in the arcade's joystick.

REALISM Blitz ain't about realism, it's about

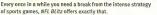


- Simple and easy to get into -> Incredibly addictive

Minuses

-> Straight port doesn't do am thing more for the PC System hog that requires a 3D card and lotsa RAM to play smoothly





# STRATEGY +

# StarCraft FROM THE BEST IN THE WORLD

DIAMOND PEL

LEARN THE SECRETS THAT MADE HIM \$10K AND WORLD CHAMP

ours of practice. months of dedication and a final confrontation in front of a local crowd - Jarom Severson's (aka Gadianton) life has got quite hectic since walking away with the \$8500 top prize in the 3rd season AMD Professional Gamer's League StarCraft final, But not too hectic to give PCXL readers the lowdown on the tactics that took him to the top - all just in time for season four registration on www.pgl.net.

Aside from the prize money and position within the StarCraft gaming community, those hours of playing also netted Gadianton an AMD K6-2 machine, a Rendition V2200-based 3D graphics card, a LinkSvs Fast Ethernet Network Starter Kit, Logitech controller, AV390 PL Advent Powered Partner Speakers and 128MB MGV RAM Not bad, eh? So how did that win come about? What were the practice regimes and the tactics employed on the road to victory? All StarCraft players - experts and novices alike - can learn something from these tips.

#### THE PRACTICE

After qualifying for the final eight of the tournament, Gadianton put three hours or so a day in to practice after returning from work and school, But that's not any old practice pro practice is as involved as other pro sports' preparation. All players have their own strategies and favored tactics and they're all pretty well known in the online community. So specific focus on the tactics of the players he was to face

in the finals was a key issue. "I did a

lot of practice for Kin-dom [the van-



Some people close to Gadianton fear that he may not be able to handle the fast life of a PGL champion. "We worry about the fame and fortune getting to his head", stated an undisclosed source.

quished finalist) specifically, since I knew I was going to face him on the second day of competition," Gadianton told us.

"My buddies [Sosowac and IN-Bobl would simulate his play [basically, offensive bunkering with the Terrans, with tanks for support) as I tried to find good counters. Once he has you trapped in your base. the game is pretty much over as he takes over the rest of the map, and you're left trying to get out. We tried a quick Reaver drop strategy against this, but decided it would probably not work as he'd be expecting it once he saw I was Protoss. Instead, we decided that a quick second town hall

> after five Zealots, and then lots more **7ealots** with about four or five Gates would definitely hold the ground war well enough to prevent him from bunkering me in.

Another key was speeding up our Zealots quickly. Once this was done, he'd be forced to go Wraiths, which I'm not at all afraid of, as their ground attack is very weak. With good scouting, and camping outside his base, he was

never able to mount an offensive attack and bunker me in."

Since Gadianton decided to be given a random side for the final match, it was tough to plan specifically. As it was, he drew Zerg (ignoring advice to select his faunted and more dominant game from the Protoss side).

#### THE FINAL

Did it go as planned after the Lost Temple map came up? "Well, it went almost exactly as planned," commented Gadianton, "My friend Sosowac taught me a lot about the Zerg race and how to play them against Terrans. I knew that he likes to attack with an offensive bunker method, so I would wait just outside his base to get a very good heads-up warning if he was mounting an attack. By not allowing him near my main base, it allowed me to have total control over the map the entire game, If he ever rushed I would simply retreat until I had more units created at my main base and use those to push him back.

"The only thing that didn't go according to plan was that he was able to make his natural expansion. However, once I knew there was no way I could stop him, because of his siege tanks on the cliff, and his bunkers, I simply made sure I had

more expansions than his single one," he continued.

After a stressful restart caused by Gadianton's keyboard and mouse locking, Kin-dom made a fatal mistake, moving out all his siege tanks that were guarding his expansion, "I countered very heavily from the other side when he did this and took out his expansion. That was pretty much the end of the game, along with me getting Mutalisks to take out his army of tanks " he concluded

#### WHAT TO LEARN

So just the story of the final game should give you a few pointers on possible tactics and strategy styles. The "turbo scout" offense is a tactic that has been seen to work very effectively on water maps. As Gadianton explains, "It's a great counter to a standard Zerg order you head straight for scouts and take down two or three Overlords before they can get Mutalisks". The fact that this strategy has not been used extensively gives it an edge - so there's another key: Work on coming up with original strategies that opponents aren't going to expect.

Here are Gadianton's thoughts on some favorite tactics for each of the three races:

## Winning tips for each race

Gadianton was kind enough to provide these final tips for winning with each race:

PROTOSS --- "My best strategy is two-Halling on land maps that allow it. It gives me so many resources that I can usually dominate the other player easily.

ZERG --- "I really like the Quicklings, and then the Mutalisks strategy. This works very well Zerg versus Zerg and versus Protoss. Against

Terran you've really got to go with Hydras instead of Mutalisks. TERRAN --- "I love using Dropships to take

out my opponent, its almost impossible for them to protect their entire base, so I like to load up a few Tanks and Marines, along with some SCV's for bunkering. Land in their base, siege up the Tanks, and build Bunkers right away. It's a very effective strategy."

Playing against good players is always a key

element as the game balance makes it possible to counter any offensive - it's just knowing how. and how to do the attacking in the first place. Watch other people, listen in on their chats over battle.net and make some powerful allies - once that's done you can start plotting walking off with the cash prize in the StarCraft teamplay tourney. Best of luck - and remember to mention PCXL in your acceptance speech once these tips have paid off. We also take royalty checks.

# A feeble recreation of the "Gadianton Attack"



Attacking this fortified Terran main base is nigh impossibie with massed Zergiings...







can be very effective at shutting someone into their base



With SCVs repairing bunkers and siege tanks slowly advancing, the besleged player is unable to break out, leaving the other player to control the whole map.



out Kin-dom's tanks and base



on the Zerg base.



Dropping siege tanks and buiding be excellent strategy, says Gadianton.



With Zerg versus Terran, this is the kind of army you wan



# The Magnificent Seven

crew New Year's resolutions, you've got bigger things to think about. Take, for instance, the coming year's biggest multiplayer games. Last year was the best ever for online gamers: Quake II was firmly established as the action game de jour, Starcraft met all of its high expectations, Unreal created a new graphics standard for shooters and Rainbow Six surprised just about everyone, turning traditional deathmatch on its ear. While those games certainly were awesome, 1999 promises to offer even more.

Developers are just now beginning to stretch their thinking when it comes to multiplayer design. Look at games like Rainbow Six and the proposed goodness from Valve known as Team Fortress. It takes more than simple deathmatch to impress us nowadays, and the games that break out big next year will be those that take a unique approach to online gameplay.

Here are seven games likely to be heading the list of those clogging up the bandwidth as increasing numbers of gamers get in to the online world.

#### IN STORES: DECEMBER (MAYBE)

## HALF LIFE: TEAM FORTRESS

alf-Life was one of the few titles that not only lived up to its hype, but actually surpassed it. Not one to rest on its laurels, Valve invested in the talents of Team Fortress Software whose TF mod was one of the most popular ever for the original Quake (perhaps surpassed only by Capture the Flag).

In contrast to the familiar shoot first, ask questions later gameplay, TF requires players to choose a team, and then choose a class on that team. The player classes range from light infantry to field medic and many choices in between (see sidebar). This variety means players have to not only find out which position best fits their playing style, but which position will help their team out the most.

Each position will have its own requirements, and each will have its own weapons as well. More than a



Thousands of servers will be hosting TF2 showdowns.

dozen of these new weapons will be available for players as well as vehicles such as Armored Personnel Carriers, tanks, and even helicopters are planned.

Team Fortress also promises a host of new gameplay experiences through its level design. The game includes more than 20 different maps that are tied together

through several large campaigns. The missions are designed with clans in mind, so a team progresses level through level of a single large campaign. Many of the missions have simple capture the flag requirements, but others are more complicated with multi-

ple objectives such as base

destruction and territory control. The developers have also included gameplay like you would see in a real time strategy game, with resource gathering and base building as main objectives. Computer-controlled bots will play

you're short of players. An intuitive communication system will enable players to strategize and follow commands while the action is at it's fiercest. Teamplay is rapidly becoming the standard in multiplayer gaming, and Team Fortress is at the forefront.

ONLINE POWER RATING--- 10 It is going to be friggin' huge.

#### EXPERTS' GUIDE

#### THE CLASSES

GI loe Equivalent---> Hawk points and coor Weaknesses---} Doesn't actually join in the game

GI loe Equivalent--- Doo Weaknesses---3 Red Cross = Easy

LIGHT INCANTRY GI Joe Equivalent ... Snake

Eves Strengths...> Fast in, fast out. Can fight on the run and still hit targets accu-

COMMANDER

Strengths--->

Can set way-

dinate teams

FIELD MEDIC

Strengths----

members

Can heal team

rately. Has the only non-pistol weapon that does location specific damage Weaknesses--- First in is usu-

HEAVY INFANTRY GI Joe Equivalent--->: Fridge Strengths--- Big

ally first to be fragged

friggin' gun Long range fire Weaknesses----Slow, not very accurate unless crouched

ROCKET INFANTRY GI loe Equivalent--- Bazooi Strengths---> Weaknesses---}

Danger of collateral damage

SNIPER GI loe Equivalent --- Lowlight Strengths---> **Excellent shot** Weaknesses---}

Long reload COMMANDO GI loe Equivalent--- Firefly

Strengths---> Weaknesses...

GI Joe Equivalent -- Lady Jave Strengths---}

Can disguise as Weaknesses---} Poorly armed,

chicks don't dig

TF spies

ENGINEER Gl Joe Equivalent ... > Tollbooth Strengths---} Can build

Weaknesses.... Looks like those YMCA guvs





IN STORES: KINGDOMS HIT THE STORES IN SPRING '99

# **TOTAL ANNIHILATION:** THE SERIES

earning a valuable lesson from Blizzard and their battle.net, Cavedog has created its own dedicated online gaming service. The new service enables Totol Annihiloton owners to join matches in a simple intuitive manner. That's the first plus, but Cavedog's best new idea just starts there.

Bonevards features its own multiplayer online-only game entitled Goloctic Wors, In this game, players control the fate of a massive universal struggle between the Arm and Core by winning small, individual TA battles. When you first log on, you must choose between the teams, and then select a planet to fight for, You will face someone from the opposing team in a head to head match-up for that planet. Every time you log on, you are given briefings from High Command that give you the current status of the overall war. and alert you to planets where you could help the struggle.

When conflict first begins, the planets are split in even numbers between the Arm and the Core. But after each day of planetary battles, the scores are tallied up. determining the number of planets and territories that change hands. The goal is to capture the other team's home base, but what it really does is make each individual deathmatch feel like it's part of a bigger whole, and gives the feeling that you are a crucial part of the overall struggle. Individual performance during

battles will determine a player's rank. Everyone starts as a private, but as players progress and as their win/loss percentage increases, they grow in rank and power. The top level you can reach is "Supreme Commander" of one side. Other ladders and rankings will also keep track of each player's command prowess. Attaining top spot requires you to be more than just a great player, however. Helping out newbies with the game and acting responsibly with the power will all be vital to attain-







ing and then maintainging the highest rank.

This new concept is sure to milk more life out of the real time strategy series that has quietly built up one of the most fervent internet following of any game in the genre. And to make sure the game stays foremost in players' minds it is being followed by Total Annihilotion: Kingdoms.

This conversion and enhancement of the original TA code is clearly a case of Worcroft meets Total Annihilation, but judging by how good it looks, that isn't so bad. One upping Storcroft, the game pits four unique fantasy races against each other. Each of these races is based on the four elements:

AIR: A warrior nation that has tamed mighty beasts and uses them to slay enemies.

EARTH: Humans based on traditional medieval themes with castles, knights, archers and other historical weapons.

FIRE: Wizards with the power to command the impressive, if rotting armies of the undead WATER: Masters of the water,

prone to splashing Set in the magical world of Darien (not to be confused with Darren, the magical husband of Bewitched's Samantha), Kingdoms adds significant polish to the series' already impressive engine. The terrain in clearly more lush and the unit animation has been beefed up for a more fluid look.

Besides these upgrades, Kingdoms will be the first Cavedog game to ship with specific Bonevards support (a TA enabler will be available as well). Consider-



One if by land, two if by sea, and...uh...three if by Internet?

ing how much attention Cavedog is paying to these online endeavors, and it seems rather clear that Total Annihilation and the other Boneyard enabled products are going to be a strong force in multiplayer gaming in the coming year. To what degree depends on the quality of games like Kingdoms. So far so good.

ONLINE RATING---> 8 Total Annihilation continues to build online gaming support and Bonevards, backed by the Galactic Wars is just going to make things bigger.



## HE OTHER CONTENDERS

#### QUAKE III ARENA

IN STORES----> When it's done (duh)

t's Quake, it looks cool, and it's the game that everyone will be copying in the coming years, John Carmack would probably give up on single player altogether if it didn't affect his sales projections. His company has consistently lead the industry when it comes to graphics and network code, and Carmack insists that Ouake Arena will be the best graphical game available - and who's to argue against that one?

Based on a tournament style of gameplay, Arena is solely about deathmatch (apologies to everyone who was really caught up in the Quake storyline). Using a form of the Mortal Kombat progression model, you'll fight against increasingly difficult opponents offline. and then use the skills learned against them in the more challenging online arena.

ONLINE POWER RATING: 10 This is Quake, for Pete's sake. When it hits, everything else will take a back seat.

#### UNREAL TOURNAMENT

IN STORES --- When it's done (but most likely around March '99) Epic has learned from its online problems this year. This title, which has been in development since Unreal shipped, follows much the

same pattern as Quake Arena with multiplayer tourneys and plenty of bots. The game has several advantages over Quake such as an earlier planned release, and more in-box bot experience. However it has some disadvantages as well, including the ill will caused by delayed Unreal patches and its still considerable hardware requirements.

ONLINE POWER RATING---> 7 It will take a lot to overcome the reputation caused by Unreal's poor Internet performance, but Epic is very serious about changing that impression, and with early reports of UT's focus they just may pull it off.

#### COMMAND & CONQUER: **TIBERIAN SUN**

IN STORES----Early '99

It's got the considerable backing of the C&C faithful as well as its own playing field of the Westwood chat matchmaker, Environments include day and night levels, higher resolutions are supported, and the voxel-based terrain is completely deformable. The changes are more than cosmetic however, as C&C Tiberian Sun has a new focus that downplays mass unit creation and focuses on unit experience. In the positioning wars. Westwood is going to re-assert their position after taking a backseat in recent months to TA and, more powerfully, Starcraft.



If the cheats are fixed, Dioblo 2 will be one of the big games of 99.



Tiberian Sun is easily one of the new year's most anticipated games.

ONLINE POWER RATING--- 8 The Command and Conquer series has been cloned so many times that

it's feeling a bit long in the tooth. However, the sheer number of C&C fans make it a contender regardless.

#### TRIBES

IN STORES....

Late '98

If this game catches on (and we sincerely hope it does) it will greatly affect the perception of multiplayer games. Built from the ground up as a massively multiplayer title. Tribes offers a strategic vet still action oriented style of gameplay. Players are driven by the game design to focus on teamplay, fill role positions on the team and follow commands in order to win. It's like a great big pick-up game of war - and tremendous fun if the early beta versions we've played are any indication.

ONLINE POWER RATING---> 7 We wish this was higher, but the Starsiege universe is still an unproven series to the mass audience of action game fans - while the fans are there from the earlier incarnations, this is a new direction for the franchise.

#### DIABLO 2 IN STORES....

anyones guess. Ours: Summer '99

With Blizzard it's

Blizzard's reputation is almost unparalleled in this fickle industry for creating mass market, bestselling games. The original Diablo is still flying high in the charts at its bargain new price - anticipation for the sequel will be immense. A much improved graphics engine, five new character types, four different locations, and the promise of a fix for the underhanded cheats that stole much of the original's luster are expected. The new title will also uti-



Tribes mokes teamplay an absolute necessity for anyone who wants to win.

lize 3D acceleration for crisper. cleaner graphics and a new combat system will hopefully retain the simplicity of the original's.

ONLINE POWER RATING --- 8 If they are able to take care of the hacks and cheaters this game is all but assured of being a massive online hit.

#### EXPERTS' GUIDE **CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR**

#### **RAINBOW SIX** ONLINE POWER RATING---> 6

A planned expansion set for early '99 is a great step, but R6 was the surprise hit of 1998 and may get overshadowed by some powerful names in '99.

#### AGE OF EMPIRES 2

ONLINE POWER RATING---> 7 Right on the cusp, if this sequel manages to significantly improve certain lag and Al Issues, AOE2 will join the top games.

#### STARCRAFT

ONLINE POWER RATING-> 7 StarCraft will retain its massive following, but as the year marches on the competition a will get much stiffer and the options more varied.

ONLINE POWER RATING --- 6 Traditional deathmatch just seems a little plain compared to what's in the works from other companies, still exhilterating.

#### TRESPASSER

ONLINE POWER RATING--> o No multiplayer? What the heck were they thinking?

# **DEMONSTRATION #2:**

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- Toss over your shoulder.
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Epic answers the uproar over Unreal's problematic Internet play with a new patch and a new game that gets the jump on Id Software

hen Unreal first debuted many people (including us) called it the best-looking game of all time. It was all but guaranteed to turn the industry on its ear,

but something funny happened on the way to market domination: The online play failed to live up to its promise, and players were forced to wait for a multiplayer patch. And they waited and waited and waited.

It wasn't until early November

that the company finally released the patch that sped up Internet play, included a custom version of GameSpy, and enabled faster downloading. While the patch has made the gameplay significantly better, many wondered if it was too little too late. Epic. however. had no intentions of letting it be

The company is working to build upon Unreal's sales success and knows that online play will dictate its future. The patch is the first step in this direction, but the company is not stopping there. Epic is following up this patch with two more that should tie up the final loose ends in the game, such as



Unreal's online woes may be solved in Unreal Taurnament

tighter bot Al. new sound effects. and further work on the multiplayer speed issues.

First of all, Epic is working on a level pack for the game, Although this addition will be welcome, the more exciting news is of a release in early 1999 of a game called Unreal Tournament, Epic has been very quiet about the title, but sources have revealed that it will have a similar format to the eagerly anticipated Quake III Arena. This new game from Id focuses on deathmatches, and for the single player game it plays like a fighting game, where players climb a competition ladder.

We talked with Epic's VP Mark Rein to see what he had to say about the company's online plans:

PCXL: Unreal Tournament sounds a lot like Quake III Arena, did it have any affect on the decision to make this game?

Rein: As soon as we saw the details about Quake Arena, we knew that people would think exactly that, but we've been planning this since before the release of Unreal

PCXL: Will the game incorporate team play elements like we've seen in games such as Tribes and Rainhow Six?

Rein: Yes, a lot of team oriented stuff is in the game. But one twist is that your team can be either bots or real players. We were the first company to include bots in a game and we are improving them greatly, so this will definitely not

be a multiplayer only game.

PCXL: How will the single player mode work then? Rein: Like a traditional fighting game using a tournament structure where players fight their way through levels of bots. PCXL: What would you say is the

biggest improvement over Unreal? Rein: This is a stand alone product not an add-on, so we have made significant changes, Besides the totally revamped gameplay, Unreal Tournament will have an EA Sports caliber interface, a few new weapons, incredible new deathmatch levels and some other stuff we can't talk about right now [Damn we hate secrets!].

Unreal's Internet difficulties have prevented it from making the waves it initially promised. But considering the company's intense focus on the matter and their commitment to this new project, the age of Unreal may just be getting started.

stever the heck makes us angry, a asionally we frag something just ause it needs it. Find out what we agged todoy on pcxl.ign.com. You'll time far the frags, but you'll stay for the BABE-O-RAMA

The holidays left our Power Me all shook up. The big players delivered while the little guys struggled to make ends meet.

1

SIERRA--- They did it, they actually did it. Holf-Life made it into stores by the liday season, and in t meantime Sierra signed the team that made Follout. GT INTERACTIVE--- Deep unter II is looking a lot like

2 2 Deer Hunter when it comes to sales (and, sadiy, graphics and gamepiay). 3 4

ACTIVISION --- > Getting Sin to stores before Half-Life was a biz deal.

4 3 Keeps Sid Meier and Firaxis in the fold, and just contin-

5 10 MONOLITH --- Shogo gets

gamers, Blood 2 turns out well - the Lithtech engine is MICROSOFT--- You know the routine it's Microsoft it's 6 6

massive, and it's doing all the right things to climb to the top of the gaming world. RED STORM --- Roinbow

7 5 Six hit the right market at the right time, but will Dominont Species take the wind out of their salis? ID SOFTWARE --- > Quoke III

8 7 equals power. Simple, huh?

NVIDIA---> The TNT has 9 caught on with the hard core gamers, and the main-

3DFX---> Prices for Voodoo Ю -2 boards are dropping dramatically and now Voodoo 3 is set to move them back up the chart.

ASC GAMES --- Its Unit based Werewolf looks exciting, Jeff Gordon just won the championship to oost its racing game, and Its Unreol-based TNN adds graphic power to the hunt-ing genre. aD REALMS--- The had

ews is that Prey has been put on the shelf for a hile, but the good news is that some team members have turned their attentions to Duke Forever. INTERPLAY .-- Unques NOWHERE IN SIGHT rounding the company. With games canned, post-

poned, or just plain up in

knows what's going on.

PC ACCELERATOR January 1999

PORE STRIP COMMERCIALS

WHY WE HATE THEM: Pore strip companies are marketing their product with commercials that depict women excitedly comparing black-

heads, grime, and other disgusting items they have dislodged from their pores. Hey, why would anyone pay \$6 for a box of eight small pore strips when a roll of duct tape costs about \$3? Women call men gross for spitting, scratching their parts, and doing other man stuff, but we'd never compare crud we've pulled out of our pores. "Hey dude, check out this big nasty pus string!" It just doesn't happen.

HOW THEY SHOULD BE FRAGGED: Let's find the advertising es who created these commercials, strip them down, wrap their bodies with duct tape, and tear it off. Then we'll compare what we've pulled off heir skins and see which executive is the greasiest, slimiest sleazebag of all.

110

# THE WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY

# EXIS

When you see the new villain from Ritual's first-person shooter, you should have no problem figuring out the decisions behind the naming of the game. Sin's top baddie, Elexis, is a beautiful but deadly (get this) biogeneticist/chemist and the head of the evil SinTEK Corporation. Compared to the butt-ugly monsters and cyberdemons that usually

pull the strings in the firstperson shooters you play. Elexis is a welcome sight

at the end of your game. We think that even if she were real (and she's not - for all of you who have problems distinguishing between game characters and real women, read our lips: She is not real), she would have no choice but to be bad. As Melanie Griffith said in Working Girl, "I have a head for business and a bod for sin." Frankly, Elexis never stood a chance.

# OTHER SINFUL GIRLS

# PAMELA ANDERSON LEE THE CRIME--> Vide

THE PUNISHMENT-



## LINDA BLAIR

THE CRIME→ Tra THE PUNISHMENT->

# ZSA ZSA GABOR THE CRIME--> A slap on a Hol-

THE PUNISHMENT-->



# GAMESCA

This month we explore, as only PCXL can, the games that didn't make the full previews, through great disaster movies.



# DEVELOPER---> Lionhead PUBLISHER---> Electronic Arts THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE---> Attock of the Extremely Giont Kick-Roxing Bovine THE PLOT--- A fully realized Utopia is altered by superpowered sorcerers who control giant, magical animals THE PLOT TWIST-> The creature Al promises to be unique and very realistic, creating real consequences for actions both good and bad THE SPECIAL EFFECTS-> Scale is key as you watch your tiny followers lead their pitiful lives and then scale back as one of your giant creatures stomps through the world they made THE GUEST STARS--> Raymond Burr and Gamera, the son of Godzilla



# DEVELOPER---> DID PUBLISHER--> Infogrames THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE---Future War of the Apacalypse THE PLOT-> The year is 2025 ... (stop me if you've heard this one) THE PLOT TWIST--- War is not fought in the real world, it's fough in the World Wide War Web. Yes, it's the WWW and W. This new virtual world was supposed to make the real world better, but instead it (gasp) makes things worse THE SPECIAL EFFECTS-> A fully 3D graphics engine and Upn'sing-style play is mixed in with more traditional C&C drag-and-drop control

THE GUEST STAR-> Peter Sellers as Dr. Strangelove





JHAT'S HOT

JHAT'S

STARSIEGE DEVELOPER--- Dynan PUBLISHER-> Sierra THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-Glant Robots Go Wild! THE PLOT--- Rebel warriors fight their way across an entire galaxy, planet by planet

THE PLOT TWIST-> No ordinary shooter here. In addition to cool sci-fi mechs, players have a wide variety of multiplayer options and playing modes to choose from, such as Capture The Flag and Team Deathmatch to name a few THE SPECIAL EFFECTS---> Powerful

weapons, stunning visual effects, and great indoor/outdoor environments add considerable polish to a gameplay-oriented title THE GUEST STAR-) Dirk Benedict



**DEVELOPER---** Cyclone Studios PUBLISHER--> 3DO THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-The Son of Tomorrow War THE PLOT--- Lost allen technology and plenty of explosions; that's all you really need to know THE PLOT TWIST-+ The fully 3D realtime action/strategy genre hasn't taken off yet, but this could be the game that gets things started once and for all THE SPECIAL FEFFCTS.... An updated 3D engine and revamped unit graphics promise an even more effective visual punch than that of the original Uprising, New weapons, night missions, and weather effects add significantly to the feel of the game THE GUEST STAR-> Twiggy the Jive-Talkin' Robot as Twiggy the Jive-Talkin' Robot

# The Heat-O-Meter

THE BUCK STOPS HERE--- Sierra's Deer Avenger lets you play a buck with a need for vengeance and an arsenal of tricks, such as an inflatable decoy that says "Help, I'm naked and I have a pizza." If real deer find out about this, PCXL staff members are going to find their heads hanging on some stag's wall.

The bad news: 1999 is the first year of Deer Hunter II clones.

BLAME IT ON RIO--- Diamond convinces the courts that its portable MP3 player, the Rio, is a device made to download and play only crappy but legal-to-obtain songs from the Inter net. Now all they have to do is convince the buying public that the exact opposite is true. THE ODD COUPLE--- Crystal Dynamics signs Playboy playmate Marliece Andrada to costar with Gex in a new platform game. It's said to be the best centerfold/lizard pairing since Pamela and Tommy Lee got married.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH ... Click Health, developer of interactive health software, says games are good for you. Stop what you are doing, drive to your local game retailer, check out the guy behind the counter, return home, and then try to read the first sentence again with a straight face.

900 ODDWORLD ... OSCAR, OSCAR ... ODDWORLD --- A FMV clip from Oddworld: Abe's Exodus has been submitted to the Oscar Committee for consideration as the best animated short. And the envelope, please ... "Not a freakin' chance."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?--- VM Labs pays big bucks for a well-known branding company to come up with a name for its new console. The final choice (drumroll, please): The Nuon. Only one name could be worse: Dreamcast.

IT'S DEAD, JIM---- Interplay cans Vulcon Fury. If you thought Spock could get mad, wait until the hardcore Trekkers find out about this

CENSORSHIP NO!---> The British Board of Film Classification tries to ban Cormogaedon II. Why doesn't it do something worthwhile and stop Dudley Moore from ever acting again? maggedon II and try to stop this game instead. The potential for carnage is far greater.

WHISTLIN' DIXIE---> Interplay releases Redneck Rompage: Possum Boyou, yet another addon pack to the long-running series. The South shall rise again. And again, and again, and again. OH, THE PLACES YOU'LL GO ... Origin announces that Ultimo Online: The Second Age will give hardcore UO fans new weapons, pit them against new enemies, and take them to strange new places they have never been before, like ancient temples, a shower, and the senior prom.



# VOODOO 3: PREPARE TO UPGRADE

The ever-evolving world of 3D-accelerators changed again with 3Dfx's announcement of Voodoo 3. The new chipset is a 2D/3D accelerator that 3Dfx claims will run 3D games with better performance than a dual Voodoo 2 SLI configuration and runs 2D applications 60 percent faster than the Banshee.

We watched a PII AnoMHz with Vondon 3 run Quake II at 1600 throughout. (The com pany says that test will be running near 40fps soon.) The new

chipset will display games up to 2048 x 1536 resolutions, still running at 6ofps,

Voodoo 3 gets its power from a brand new chip that incorporates 8.2 million transistors, a dual 32-bit texture rendering architecture, and an upgrade of the 2D hardware used in the Voodoo Banshee Most exciting is the fact that 3Dfx is shoot-

ing for a lower price

point than the current

Vondon 2 Several board manufactures have confirmed that they are looking at the \$150 to \$200 price range for the board, with the low end being talked about quite often. Other top features

of the chipset include full DVD compatibility. support for LCD flat panel screens and TV outs that will work with HDTV.

Now is one of the those times in the computer game industry that the hardware has far outpaced the game software, creating an exciting new challenge for game designers and offering some amazingly fresh visual experiences for

gamers

3Dfx has created two versions of the Voodgo 3 chipset. The consumer targeted 3000 and the

chinsets is as follows Voodoo 3 3000 on triangles/sec 366 Megatexels/sec 350MHz RAMDAC 183MHz Core

Voodoo 3 2000 4 million triangle/sec 250 Megatexels/sec 300MHz RAMDAC 2048 x 1536 @ 65Hz 125MHz Core

th cards **DVD** Acceleration Digital FCD support Digital video out

# HOW TO ... THE EXCUSES EDITION

# HOM TO SAVE FACE

Internet gaming services like THE ZONE and MPLAYER send you to a chat room after you play, where you can gloat over each victory.

However, even the best players have an occasional had match. But the true pros manage to save face with witty, almost poetic, postgame banter.

We've collected a few examples that can make you look good even in the worst of times

- ----- When in doubt always blame the lag
- --- "I had four of you in my sights when my damn mouse froze up\*
- --- "That's what I get for trying something new"
- --- "Oh, I see you're going to use the 'bug' for victory" "That's ze same vay vee
- killed Thresh. Apparently lag to Sveden is quite, how you say, 'shitty" --- "Someone switched my
- controls. I'll kill the bastard" --- And finally, the PCXL favorite, "Again, dammit!"

# HOW TO ESCAPE A COURT MARTIAL

In RAINBOW SIX, once in a while you may have the uncontrollable urge to take out your entire team, or TK. The key to being a professional TKer (we don't condone this) is to escape unnoticed and be allowed to kill again. The patch lets everyone know who killed who, though, so now you must adapt and learn new ways to stay in the game.

---} "I'm really

sorry, but my

computer got

all screwy and

the fire button

got stuck"

il went to get

another beer

and my girl-

friend took

over Don't

worry, I'll take

care of her"

--- "finsert name

herel fired at

me and I got freaked"

grenade bug I

was reading

--- "Must have been that







Killing teammates and getting off without any punishment is the American way.

- about\* --- "That wasn't me! Someone logged on with my name.
- I've been framed!" --- Change name quickly, then point out that [insert name here] must have quickly switched names to
- avoid his due punishment --- Claim you were protecting their backs and in some way actually saved their lives
- --- Mention that it might have something to do with the Kennedy assassination
- --- If in doubt, say that someone from PC Gamer has been on your server (anyone who has played with them before will believe this one every time)

# HOW TO BAIT A CAMPER

Every now and again you are squared off in a game against some miserable camper, who refuses to leave his tactical advantage. Enter his area and you die nearly every time. Your only bet is to taunt the camper out into the open through trickery, mom jokes, or any of these: --- "Come out and swim, you big pink canoe"

us big kids out here? Do you want your mommy?"

- --- "Oh my God, I'm out of ammo!"
- "I'm stuck! Oh well I guess I'll just kill myself"
- "All right PC Gamer, we are growing tired of your cowardly methods"

MESCAZ



CREED DEVELOPER---Insomnia Entert PUBLISHER--- EA THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE---> The Day the City Went Boom THE PLOT--- Things move, things shoot, things die, and the safety of a city lies in the balance THE PLOT TWIST-> Plenty of civillans run around just begging to be shot while dynamic missions keep the action fresh every time you play THE SPECIAL EFFECTS-> Loads of Al characters to interact with and an entire city to destroy, uh, I THE GUEST STAR-+ Mr. T as Samson the Angry Cab Driver



ROLLCAGE PUBLISHER-> Psygnosis THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-

Camage Race 2500 THE PLOT--- Like any great action/disaster flick, Rollcoge has no plot, it's all about flat-out speed THE PLOT TWIST--- Unlike typical racing games, Rollcage has cars that are invincible and surroundings that can be completely and utterly destroyed THE SPECIAL EFFECTS-> Too many to number. This game's got gorgeous visual effects, great

explosions, and a brilliant techno soundtrack. There is also rumor that the game will feature this nifty trick called "lens-flare", which makes it appear that the sun is shining down in the players eyes. Man, we wish all games had this feature, then we'd be impressed. THE GUEST STARS-Starsky and/or Hutch as Hutch and/or Starsky

pc.ign.com

http://

# X-TRA

# GAMESCAN

RESIDENT EVIL 2 DEVELOPER-> Capcom PUBLISHER-> Capcom THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE--> Night of the Not-Quite-Dead Dead THE PLOT-> With zombies, mor sters, and countless shotguns lying und, the plot kind of writes itself. doesn't it? THE PLOT TWIST-> The zombies like brains... OK, it's not much of a twist, but it's an involving schlockyhorror experience. THE SPECIAL EFFECTS--- Support for 3D acceleration means all the pixelated graphics from the PlayStation original are replaced with smoother, more eye-catching rotting corpses THE GUEST STAR-)



re Romero as corose #3

DEVELOPER--- Simutronics PUBLISHER--> 989 Studios THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-> Robot Invasion! Escape! THE PLOT--- The year is 2025 ... and them robots start fighting for some unknown reason (being robots they don't really have to give a reason) THE PLOT TWIST--- Online play is at the heart of this game, and because arenas support up to 32 players at a time, the action es to be fierce. Esse 989 Studios is setting Cyberstrike 2 up to be the older more violent beether of its masshade multi. player game Ever THE SPECIAL EFFECTS-> Cyber-Strike 2's weapons' effects are very impressive and the variety of envints keeps the action visually fresh throughout THE GUEST STAR- Mr. T as Dirk

the Angry Assassin

# HOW TO MAKE PGL FLY

hen the AMD PROFESSIONAL GAMER'S LEAGUE first started, it gave many games hope that their passion could someday become mainstream entertainment fare. It also gave a great deal of hope to all the people who were picked last in gym class, offering them a chance to be the best at something they loved. The first two PEL championships were uscessful in their own ways, but we think that the league has a long way to go before it can be considered a legitimate sports establishment in today's medis-asvy times. Standing out among the NBA, NiHL, NFL, and MLB is a difficult task, but here are a few things the PEL can brown from its competitors to be them at their own game.

CELEBRITY CREATION—) We understand that the average (wake champion is not going to be the most outgoing kind of person, but maybe it's time to help build some fan favorite characters. For example, here is a comparison of the top NBA player with the top StarCraft player. Our suggestions to TillerAhan: Lose the sweater and the funky '700 millor thing hanging on your apartment wall. It's a step in the right direction.

STEROIDS.... At least one illegal substance should boost gameplaying skills.

DRUG SCANDALS.... Once a player gets caught or dies because of that drug, the others can gain publicity by faking their care and admiration for a fallen junkie they've never met.

OUT-OF-CONTROL STARS—A P PGL star who occasionally assaults fans (and anyone else who gets in his way) with his keyboard or chokes them with his mouse cord would spice up the experience and make the league more TV-friendly. Start pampering the young players who are really good now and you will see just how out-of-control they can be before very lone.

BEER---- Until the PGL gets beer sponsors, we refuse to call it a professional sport.

CHEERLEADERS---> This is a

# CELEBRITY CREATIVITY





PGL StarCraft competitor, TillerMan, could learn a lesson about gaining publicity from NBA bad boy Latrel Sprewell.

gimme. Making up cheers with rhymes for "frag" would be a definite plus: "in the bag," "bootie sag," "turkey shag," etc.

IRRELEVANT BREAKS.→ Sure the PGL doesn't have any commercial sponsors, but we've been conditioned to go to the bathroom every eight minutes. So please indulge us.

> BETTING---) "I got \$10,000 on Thresh's opponent, 25 to 1." (Betting Scandals: Thresh loses, buys new car.)



Blech ... Corey Feldman.

# PERFECT GAME GIRL

# HOW TO BUILD THE PERFECT GAME CHARACTER

etting the right type of game character is crucial to a game's success. Take, for instance, LARA CROFT. No character in recent vears has become so well known and so copied as Core's buxom adventurer. But though many have imitated her style, no character has even come close to matching it.

Lara has been successful in part because she takes many of the characteristics of modern-day celebrities and uses them to her advantage. Here's our breakdown of the reasons Lara is the perfect game character - and the celebrities that inspire her.

The burn is most prevalent during the gameplay, so it has to look good (Clndy Crawford)





Lara is just smart, independent, and full-of-attitude enough that the P.C. police and feminist organizations don't notice that the only reason she is famous is for her brea



woman equals really (Elizabeth Hurley)



(Courtney Cox)



Action games have lots of ru h keeps the legs in g (Mary Hart)



# STARCRAFT: BROOD WARS DEVELOPER--- Blizzard

MON

PUBLISHER-> Blizzard THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-> Allans Ate My Pants

THE PLOT-> Three races duke it out for the fate of whatever planet they are fighting on at the time THE PLOT TWIST-+ Now there are seven new units to add to the mix, 100 naw multiplayer levals, and a new tile set to fight on THE SPECIAL EFFECTS--- Same as

always - lots of little creatures attacking lots of other little creatures. It truly warms one's heart THE GUEST STAR-> Current alien fave John Lithgow who will try to



# SPEED BUSTERS

DEVELOPER--- Ubi Soft PUBLISHER- Ubi Soft THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE-Speed III: Bust This Bitch THE PLOT-> Keep the car moving at

top speed no matter what the cost THE PLOT TWIST-> Plenty of alternata paths, secret maneuvers, and realtime damage

THE SPECIAL EFFECTS--- Specular highlighting, lens flare, and all the other typical racing-gama stuff THE GUEST STAR-> David Hasselhoff (with shirt on) as Michael Knight, the toughest '8os car driver In the world (who also happens to talk to his car and release hit records in Germany)

uttp:// Selfuces.

# DESCENT FREESPACE: SILENT THREAT DEVELOPER--- Volition PUBLISHER --- Interplay

THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE---Titonic II: Spoce Icebergs THE PLOT--- You go behind ene lines to kill bad guys in the name of

universal peace THE PLOT TWIST---> Forty brand-

new missions, two new ships, four new weapons, and a new capital ship should keep pilots occupied

THE SPECIAL EFFECTS--- Every space-combat effect that you can think of but who would expert less from the add-on pack to the excellent space shooter

THE GUEST STARS--- Tito lackson and Charo for a fabulous closing imber featuring coconuts



EXTREME PAINTRALL DEVELOPER --- ) Creative Carnage PUBLISHER--- HeadGames THE DISASTER MOVIE TITLE---> Gotcho II: This Time I Really Gotcho THE PLOT---> The first nonviolent 3D shooter (and this is supposed to be a good thing?) THE PLOT TWIST--- Enemy Al has

computer players running into walls for no apparent reason. Eventually you'll wish you could get violent THE SPECIAL EFFECTS--- The paint

is in different colors and there is plenty of pixelation, I guess these would be more aptly titled "special ed effects" THE GUEST STAR--- Anthony

Edwards as the geeky college student who didn't want to get involved, but does anyway

# DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

# **Monolith Productions**













Get Medievel cost three developers their lives and two others were forced to walk around naked.

finished, you might expect the programmere and artists to sit around and drink

hen a game is

large quantities of cheap beer. That's only half right. Even after the game is on store shelves. there is not much time for lounging around.

Just look at Monolith. At press time, the company has just finished production of its latest game, Shogo. The game has been received well by critics and gamers alike, but Monolith's work is not even close to complete. While the rest of the company is finishing titles like Blood 2 and starting a new "supersecret game," the Shogo team continues to tweak its

multiplayer version.

The market pressures of finishing a game on time make the "when it's done" axiom easier to say than to follow. Far too often. games ship before they are ready. and they require patches to make everything run as well as the developers intended. Understanding the need to get Shogo on the retailers' shelves, Monolith put much of its late development focus on perfecting the single-player game because many people who play this mode aren't the hardcore crowd and don't even understand the concept of patches.

See BILLION: 2

NOMBER OF BLOCKS TO MICROSOFT NUMBER OF TIMES EMPLOYEES HAVE SPOTTED BILL GATES AND HIS SEXY. YOUNG WIFE: 2 NUMBER OF TIMES EMPLOYEES REAL-17F THE RARE ATRACTING POWERS OF

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 7 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WITH COLORED HAIR: 4-10 (varies weekly)
NUMBER OF STARBUCKS IN KIRKLAND. WASHINGTON:



Once the single-player game was fully tweaked and shipped. the company turned its focus toward fixing multiplayer bugs to appease the hardcore wanting to enjoy the mech-smashing online Compared with the 100-hour-plus workweeks at the end of a project. the patch process is relatively laid back. Testers continue playing the game after it ships, looking for bugs, while programmers streamline the multiplayer code to make the game faster. While all this is going on, some team members split off to work on other projects, following a development schedule laid down years in advance.

The slow process that takes place after a game is released helps smooth the transition between games and keeps the development teams working on a project throughout. It also reduces the traditional lag in development during the downtime between titles. Once all the patches are complete, then the remainder of the team moves on to other projects, starting the cycle once again.

# ARE YOU HARDCORE OR JUST A GEEK?

The line between hardcore gaming and basic geekdom is always ambiguous and often sketchy, especially for people like us who play a lot of games. Making sure you know which side of the fence you sit on is extremely important, and the only way to get better is to find out exactly where you stand and get help if necessary. Fill out the following guiz and score yourself by our helpful chart at the bottom. Remember, be honest: The first step toward overcoming geekiness is admitting you have a geek problem.

- What gets your blood boiling the fastest?
  - ☐ Picture A ☐ Picture B
  - ☐ Picture C
- Picture D











- ☐ Picture A The classic
- ☐ Picture B The performance enhancer
  - ☐ Picture C Mom's paying the bills, so she calls the drinks
  - Picture D Drinking means bathroom breaks and that would
  - mean game stoppage













- 3. Where is your hand most likely to be when you wake up on a Sunday morning?
  - ☐ Picture D

Picture A

D Picture B

D Picture C

D Picture D



















--> For every answer of C, give yourself one point

--> For every answer of B, give yourself two points

--- For every answer of A, give yourself three points (If you answered question 7, subtract four points. Rating games by facial expressions is absolutely inexcusable)

20-21: You drink too much and spend too much time thinking about sex 16-19: You realize the value of a real life, but could spend more time playing ga-13-16: The perfect balance: You're a hardcore gamer who can still exist in modern socie

9-12: You're almost there, but sometimes a real life is a worthwhile sacrifice for the perfect rocket jump, honest 6-8: Admit it, you'd turn down a big date for a really great deathmatch. It's time to get se cerious help

2-5: Remember what the outside world looked like? Maybe it's time to put down Quake II and step outside for a few months. What's that bright thing in the sky? We call it the sun 0-2: OK, we will start from the beginning. Have you ever noticed how the birds and the











- 6. What is most likely on your calendar? ☐ Picture A Dates with McCoy Twins
  - ☐ Picture B Oilers vs. Vikings 1 p.m.
  - ☐ Picture C Quake III release date

  - ☐ Picture D Ultima Online party in the Yew Township











- ☐ Picture B
- ☐ Picture C
- ☐ Picture D

☐ Picture A

☐ Picture B

☐ Picture C ☐ Picture D























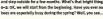








- D Picture A
  - ☐ Picture B
  - ☐ Picture C
  - ☐ Picture D







# letters@pcxl.com

# FEEDBACK

This is the point in the issue where we post your post, and ridicule you wherever possible. Think we're being too harsh to our loyal readers? Too damn badl We like to have our fun and not much surpasses the pure thrill of embarassing other people. Go ahead, send us some mail.

# CLUELESS

What's your beef with NAM? The gameplay more than makes up for the lame Build engine graphics. I hope it makes enough to spawn a sequel made with the Unreal engine.

– James Wilson

Not even worthy of a response. Your taste in games is beyond reproach.

OK. WE WILL

You can call me boring, dull, or other terms — that is up to you. I like a good [oke as much as the next guy, even though I have been accused of not having much of a sense of humor, but your magazine failed to even have me crack a smile.

- Boring in Idaho

Here goes. You are boring, dull, and otherwise ignorant. Had enough? And those accusers were right.

GET REALI

I'm currently playing the Half-Life DEM, so I know when So Memory and that it does deliver everything that it promised (great Al, interaction with NPCs ...). But I've been eyeing Tresposes r Granted, Tresposes r Han so no multiplayer to speak of, and Half-Life's only worthwhile multiplayer aspect will be sold separately from the game. Both games boast major technological advancements in Al and interactivity, but which is best (in terms of immersion)?

One major pain is that Trespasser comes out in October and Half-Life comes out in November, so I'm going to have to choose between the two. I am really enjoying the Half-Life demo; its interactivity and fun factor takes me back to the days of Duke 2D. But I really like the

concept of Trespasser where anything and everything you see can be manipulated, picked up, used, or destroyed. Now that's immersion. And if Trespasser can pull off the Al that's been discussed in countless magazines, then I think I'm going to have a real tough time deciding which game I should be looking forward to most.

- Brian Howe

This is pretty simple. Half-Life is, so far, the game of the year, and Tresposser Isn't. Countless magazines were right about Tresposser's aims, but the realistic physics engine is actually a drawback to fun gameplay. Don't be fooled: Buy Holf-Life and buy it often.

GUILTY AS CHARGED
You guys are first again. PCU.
has produced, mailed, and
blamed Microsoft for a CD that
blamed Microsoft for a CD that
will not work or run under Wings.
You offer no reason why Bill's
baby is at fault. The first CD
worked, but the second did not. I
want only what I consider the
best on my computer (skyNET),
but it appears that you guys are
just like the rest of the world — If
you screw up, you blame
Microsoft and Bill Gates.

Someone has to be the scapegoat and it's better him than us. Additionally if there are any typos, style problems, or mispellings we'd like to take this time to blame Microsoft as well. Without a managing editor we used the ever dependable Microsoft Word spellchecker for pretty much everything. So send complaints straight to the man.

## COINCIDENCE?

Just stopped by to say another great issue of a great mag. By the way, In your preview of Wheel of

Time, when you thrust your infamous Five Questions deep into Mr. Dahlgren's ... mind, did you notice something vaguely famillar about the product that he refers to as head cheese? Pig parts silced, seasoned, and pressed into a felled mass? Can everybody say SPAM?? — Cheese Lover

Stop, already, you're making us hungry.

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

Thanks for sending me a trial issue (October 1998). I really enjoyed the content, but have opted not to subscribe, the main reason being that I find much of the magazine to be unreadable. The font size is too small. You should whack a few hundred words off each article, increase the font size, and strive for better resolution. Keep trying until you get h right.

Greetings from southeast Ohio!

— Dan Liebtag,
bassist/librarian/Browns fan

# WE'RE SORRY ABOUT YOUR FADING EYESIGHT.

UMUSTBEHIGH@PCXLCOM
Just figured I'd drop a line to this
address cause I am really bored.
So, are you high? Just curious.
- Anderson Nichols

High, what do you mean high? Dude, what are you talking about. Quit tripping us out, man – hey little dudes anyone else got the munchies. Mmm...pizza.

You guys are sick ... uuh ... hmmmmmmmm, carry on. – Sick Guy

JOB OPPORTUNITIES — HONORARY STAFF MEMBER NEEDED

So by honorary staff member, you mean sucker. I take it I won't get that Lear [et I'd been hoping for. Are there any perks? Do I get

an honorary office with a view? An honorary company car? Honorary underlings? I doubt it! I mean, what's to entice me to hang out at some newspaper stand all day when I already have a busy schedule of, umm, loafing, slacking, gaming, and sleeping? I can't just push aside my previous priorities for some trumped-up, fabricated position. If you could at least promise me some hot chicks, I might consider it. I've got to tell you, you're just not making it worth my while.

— Daniel Paul Soref
dsoref@indiono.edu

PCXL is still looking for "honorary" staff members to make our lives easier. Interested candidates should posess a car, an ID (saying your 21 - real or otherwise), and a willingness to constantly buy us more beer. You fly, we'll buy. Applicants should send their information to muchwork napow@pcxLcom

WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE?

I just bought my first issue of PCXL only a few days ago. In those few short days, it became my favorite PC mag of all time. The love of chicks and beer, the grand supply of attitude, and the use of the word "shit" has entrenched the magazine deeply into my heart.

Keep kicking ass.

— Ivica Folnovic

We don't feel the need to use words like "shit" unless the situa-

words like "shir" unless the situation really calls for the word 
"shit." But most shit does.

Llove PCXL so far and it's by far

the freshest magazine going.

Hey, can you put me on a subscription list for PCXL, if I'm not
already there?

— George Broussard,

Partner, 3D Realms www.3drealms.com

Many thanks, now where the hell is Duke Nukem Forever!?

# IF SOMETHING BLOWS, WE WON'T LIE ABOUT IT.

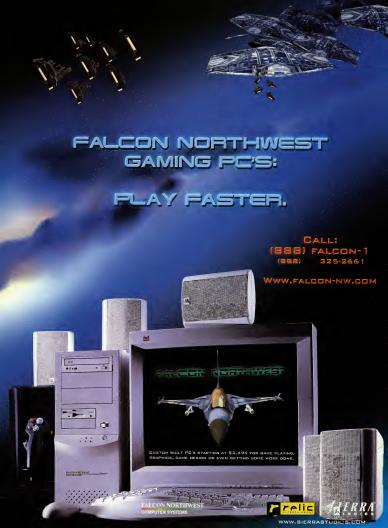


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# **Game Design for Dummies**

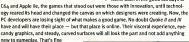
s much as I will forever believe that the PC is, has been, and always will be the best platform for gaming, I had an attack of console game appreciation recently. It made me realize that in the PC gaming industry, for the last couple of years, technology has ruled over game design innovation. PCs have always had better games (the hard drive storage space alone creating infinitely greater possibilities, especially for strategy and adventure games), but when it comes to design, console developers have leaped ahead of their

PC counterparts. The advances of the Voodoo chipset, Pentium II processors, Aureal 3D sound effects, and other techphiles' wet-dream hardware have turned attention away from innova-

tive gamenlay

Take a look at Goldeneve for N64. It's 3D engine had better textures but no better geometry than 3D Realms' now-past-its-prime Build, yet the game design had more flavor, style, and function than even Ouake II. Likewise. Activision's third-person adventure Tenchu had more originality and atmosphere than any Tomb Raider clone has managed and than LucasArts' Indiona Jones is likely to supply.

It's down to the platform limitations. Back in the good old days of



for Id; that's its plan, What's everyone else's excuse?

Hard to believe that a console game set

new standards in a first-person shooter.

Microprose's Klingon Honor Guord is an ideal example all Unreal engine-powered looks and no substance. Yes, I want my games to look awesome on the Voodoo- or TNTpowered machines, but I also want to see some originality, some ideas, some innovation. Now that technology makes many gameplay concepts feasible, we should expect more than just Roinbow Six to lead the way to a new genre. Many developers are just ticking along with technology and

If every PC game designer had, say, a PII 300 with Voodoo 2 to design on for the next two years, games would get better; they'd be more original and more fun. Innovation should be applauded and mere tech demos slammed. Their place is at the trade shows, not in the marketplace.

forgetting about innovation.



Rob you blathering idiot! Have you lost your everloving mind? Back on crack? Miss the homeland? I agree that much of the innovation in gameplay comes from the console side, and that the lack of PC originality has plenty to do with technology, but would you rather play four-player split-screen Goldeneye or hop onto any Quake II server with 32 other blood-hungry contestants? Get serious.

You want innovation? I give you Trespasser no really, take it: I sure don't want it. There is no denying that DreamWorks was really trying to innovate with the 3D game. But innovation in gameplay and technology aren't always good, as Trespasser clearly shows. The key is making the experience more immersive and enjoyable. That must be done with technology and gameplay, If Half-Life didn't use the technology for graphics, effects, voiceovers, and AI, then that game would be nearly as bad as Klingon Hangr Guard, Yes, Half-Life has a story, but the real key is the way Valve used the current technology to drop you smack-dab in the middle of an amazing experience.

My advice to developers is to avoid pulling a Trespasser (totally-new-model b.s.), and to focus on making smaller innovations, changing settings, and delivering a wider variety of wellthought-out entertainment - either that or make another Deer Hunter.

- MIKE SALMON

# **NEXT MONTH?**

# \*\*\* PCXL GETS SCHOOLED

World War II Flight Sims, yes we finally decided to find out what all the fuss is about - and what we learned just may shock you, it probably won't but that possibility remains nonetheless. Just buy the issue, damn you!



## THE SEX ISSUE

And now for a change of pace, the Universe's authority on all things PC Gamish (PCXL, but you knew that) is going to feature sex and scantily clad women in our next issue. Yes, we know this is a stretch, but with your prayers, we'll be able to see it through.

TWO COASTERS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE Due to an editorial slip-up that really could have been avoided, PCXL will release the full version of Holf-Life on our new 2nd disc. You don't really believe that, do you? Good. Yes Sierra, you can put the gun down now, Easy, No, the real plan is for the second disc to be a "Making of the 1st PCXL Disc" documentary CD-ROM.

LOVE, PCXL STYLE The following babes don't read PCXL, but if they did, they'd tell say, "it's the shit".





124



"DRAKAN has pure visual elegance." Adrenaline Vault







"A choice blend of impressive technology and original gameplay..."

NextGeneration



"DRAKAN has 'play me' written all over it."

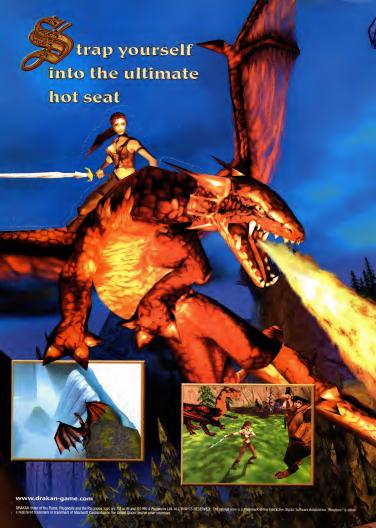
PC Gamer



"The flight model in DRAKAN is on par with, if not better than, any flight simulator we've seen."

PC Accelerator



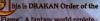


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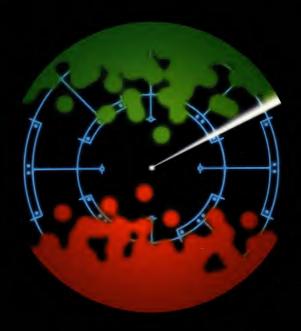
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